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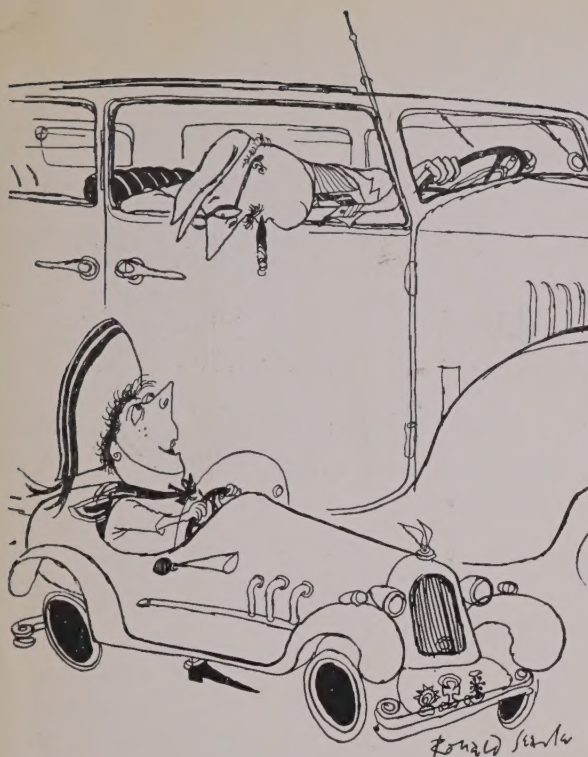
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David Moore

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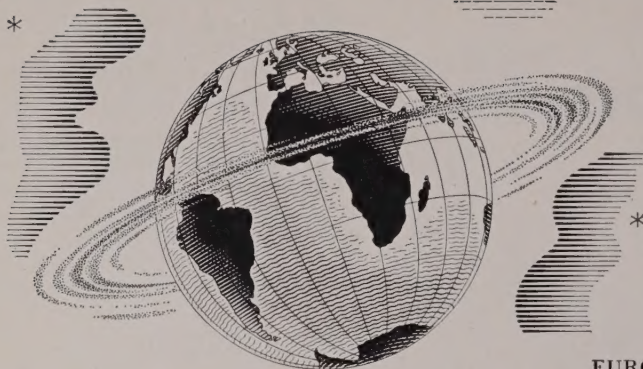
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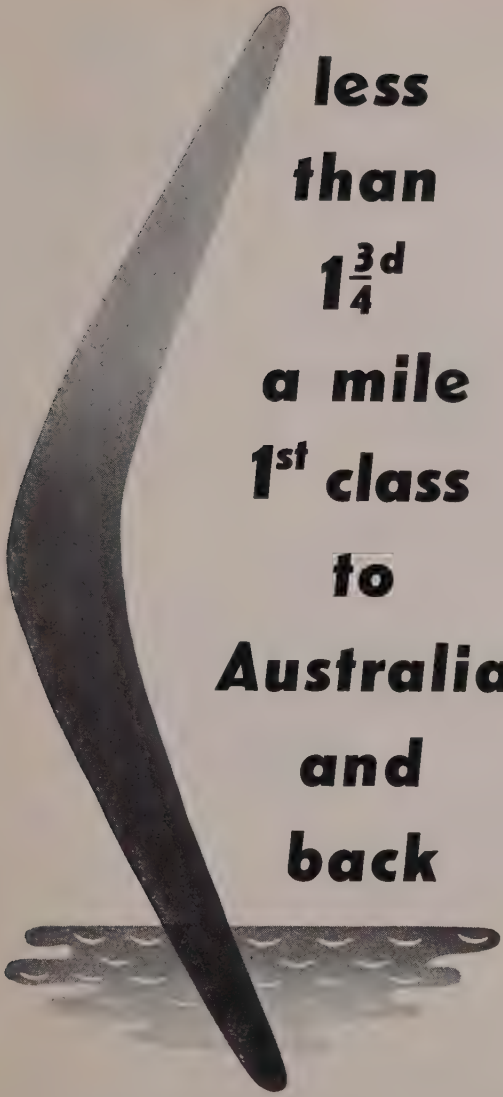
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*Cover: Summer Palace of the Bey of Tunis*

*A.P.A. from Camera Press*

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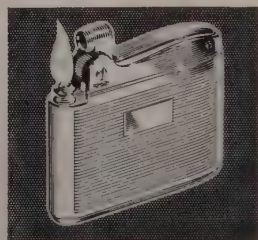
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Editor *Michael Huxley* Executive Editor *Selwyn Powell* Art Editor *Derek Weber*

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*Cover: Place de la Concorde, Paris*  
*Dominique Darbois*

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*Ektachrome by Peter Keen*

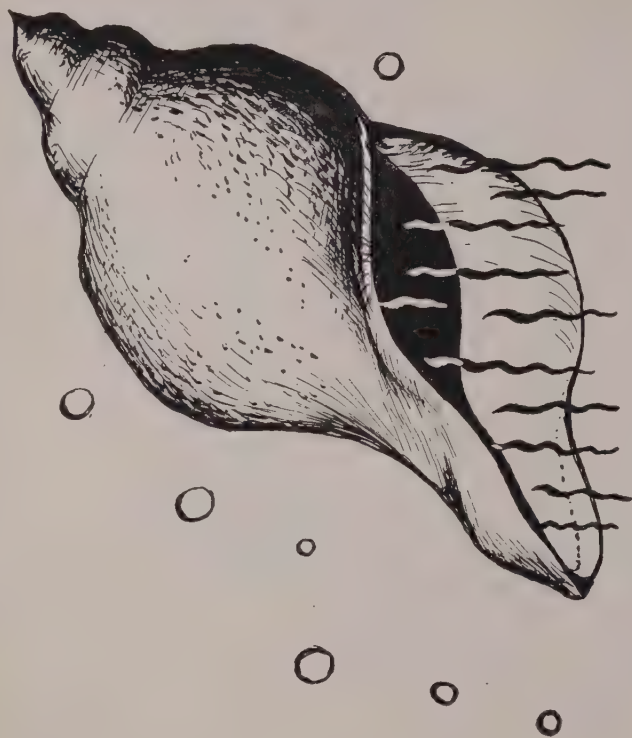
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# Constantinople, 1453

by MALCOLM BURR, D.Sc.

*The author, who was Professor of English at the School of Economics in Istanbul, has known the former City of Constantine for fifty years and lived there for thirteen. As the translator of two Guides to the city, his knowledge of its topography enables him to draw a vivid picture of the circumstances in which its long-awaited capture by the Turks took place on May 29th 500 years ago*

At the beginning of the 15th century the Byzantine Empire was but the shadow of its once mighty self. Almost the whole of the Asiatic provinces had been lost to the ever-expanding empire of the Ottoman Turks. Smyrna was held by the Knights of Rhodes and all that was left of Greek domains was the pathetic little "empire" of Trebizond, as much Georgian and Laz as Greek, where the last of the Comneni were allowed by the Turks to survive their mother-city by half-a-dozen years. The Ottomans were undisputed masters of all the country on the east of the Bosphorus, with their capital at Bursa. Sultan Bayezid, surnamed Yildirim, the Thunderbolt, built the castle of Anadolu Hisari, on the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus, to command the narrow waters.

The Ottomans had crossed the Dardanelles at the invitation of the Greek Cantacuzene, made a base at Gallipoli, swarmed into the Balkans and advanced to the Danube. To the west of Constantinople they held the coast past Bulair, Rodosto and Chorlu, only 60 miles from Constantinople. The province of Thrace, and not all of that, was the only countryside upon which the city could draw for supplies and men. Even there were many Turks, guests of Cantacuzene. Within the city itself there was a Turkish concession consisting mainly of political refugees, a potential fifth column.

So Constantinople was but an island in the heart of a huge military empire extending from the Euphrates to the Danube. When the Turks moved their capital to Edirne, once Adrianople, their intention to be a great European power was written on the wall.

There was no outside help upon which the Emperors could call. Thessalonika had fallen to Murad II, father of Mohammed the Conqueror, who took Corinth and Patras. The islands were but a precarious source of oil, wine and a few sailors. In Greece there were Venetian holdings, with the Latin principality of Achaea, a relic of the Fourth Crusade, waiting upon the Sultan's pleasure. Only in the Morea was a parcel of the Byzantine Empire left, under the last Emperor's two

brothers, but they were too far, too weak and too busy squabbling to be able to afford help.

The ancient city, once the richest and most beautiful on earth, for a thousand years the seat of Christendom, with a university as old, commanding a vast and wealthy empire, was a plum ripe for the plucking.

In Christendom there was no unity. The bestiality of the Crusaders when they sacked the city in 1204 and their fifty-seven years of inept rule had left the bitterest hatred against Rome. To the north, in the Balkans, some Slav states had grown up in the Orthodox faith and the Serbian Tsar Dushan had dreamt of combining Serbian strength with Greek culture and keeping the Turks out of Europe, but his premature death in 1354 had destroyed that hope of Eastern Christianity. His empire fell to pieces and its remnants became tributary to the Turks.

In 1389 Bayezid, master of Anatolia, entrenched in Europe, desired Constantinople. After building his castle he blockaded the city and peremptorily ordered the Emperor Manuel II to pull down some towers erected on the walls and to pay him tribute. He controlled the countryside within a few leagues of the doomed city and was preparing to lay siege to it.

On these ominous signs the Emperor John V had gone to Venice and Rome to enlist help and even accepted conversion and a union of the churches that was but fleeting. Manuel followed his example, reaching Paris and even London. There was some result, for a crusade was raised, but in 1396 Bayezid smashed the powerful European army on the Danube at Nicopolis. It is typical of the disunion of Europe that the fate of the day was decided by the charge of Serbian cavalry under Despot Lazar the Tall, already a tributary of the Sultan. The flower of European chivalry perished.

But in that black hour respite was coming. In 1402 Bayezid hurried to Ankara to meet Tamerlane, whose Tartar hosts were advancing into Asia Minor. The Turks were totally defeated; Yildirim himself was captured and soon died. Then for twelve years there was

civil war between his sons, so Constantinople had breathing-space.

Tamerlane's enmity to the Turks made him a potential ally of the Christian princes; and Henry III of Castile, whose ambassadors had been at Ankara at the time of the battle, sent his Chamberlain Clavijo in 1403 on another embassy to the Tartar chieftain. Delayed at Constantinople for five months, Clavijo was enabled to satisfy to the full his interest, characteristic of the period, in relics and churches. Of relics Constantinople possessed a formidable array: arms of St John the Baptist and of St Anne; bones of many Saints and of the Holy Innocents; the Sop given to Judas and a portrait of Our Lady painted by St Luke; pieces of the True Cross and personal relics of Christ. So seriously was this cult of relics regarded that at the time of Clavijo's visit a lawsuit was being brought against the Emperor Manuel himself for having purloined the little finger of St Anne for his private collection.

Clavijo's requests to be allowed to go sight-seeing were readily granted by the Emperor; but not always immediately as on one occasion, when he wished to see relics in the church of St John the Baptist, "the Emperor had gone a-hunting, the keys of the reliquaries being left with the Empress his wife, and she had failed to send those for our use."

With all the diligence of Baedeker Clavijo, in the narrative of his embassy, noted down architectural details of the churches and monasteries he visited. He was greatly im-

pressed by their magnificent interiors, especially the mosaics of religious subjects. Santa Sophia is described with such care that even if the church had been destroyed we could still have formed a picture of it from his account.

The appearance of the city was at that time very different from that of today. Then there was but a single, and modest, minaret, whereas now these elegant figures stud the skyline by the hundred. Nor were there any of the beautiful fountains and imperial mausolea which the Turks have constructed since. When the Emperor Michael Palaeologus had recovered the capital from the Latins in 1261, he had found the place almost deserted, in a pitiable condition. The architectural beauties of Byzantium had mostly vanished, such as the splendid porticoes that had garnished the long avenues and the countless statues that from ancient days had graced the forums.

Clavijo, in describing the vast extent of the city, noted that "everywhere there are many great palaces, churches and monasteries, but most of them are now in ruin". For in 1204 the Crusaders had burnt down half the city. Countless Greeks had followed the Imperial family into exile. And when the pillage and the slaughter had died down the balance-sheet was a melancholy one. Greeks by the thousand had been slaughtered by the Latins, sanctuaries pillaged, bronze statues melted down and all metal seized; and treasures of art and value amassed over a thousand years had been carried off.



A. J. Thornton





Othmar

(Above) Looking from Rumeli Hisari across the Bosphorus towards Anadolu Hisari, the castle built by Sultan Bayezid in 1393. (Below) Rumeli Hisari, which Mohammed the Conqueror built in four months in 1452 on the European shore to cut off help for Constantinople from the north—help that never came



Sender

### BYZANTINE EMPERORS

Constantine I	306-337
(founder of Constantinople)	
John V	1341-1391
[John VI (usurper)]	1347-1354]
Manuel II	1391-1425
[John VII (regent)]	1398-1402]
John VIII	1425-1448
Constantine XI	1448-1453

### OTTOMAN SULTANS

Murad I	1359-1389
Bayezid I	1389-1403
[Interregnum]	1403-1413]
Mohammed I	1413-1421
Murad II	1421-1451
Mohammed II, the Conqueror	1451-1481

The great games and chariot races of the Hippodrome, for which ancient Constantinople was so famous, had become rare in earlier centuries and ceased under the Latins. The Palaeologi did not revive them, though Clavijo found the arena used for jousts in the mediaeval style, adjacent buildings being "arranged to serve for the accommodation of the dames and damsels of high degree" when they witnessed such tourneys. These buildings comprised a marble gallery supported on thirty-seven pillars of white marble, "each so great that at arm's length it would take three men to embrace the shaft". One of the ancient glories of the Hippodrome, the famous quadriga in an alloy of copper, silver and gold, had been removed to Venice in 1204; but in the arena which it had adorned there stood, and still stand, two mementoes of the great past: the obelisk of Thothmes III, erected by Theodosius I in A.D. 390, and near it the Serpentine Column, brought from Delphi by Constantine the Great. By the time of the last Constantine the once splendid Hippodrome was merely waste ground, which the Turks were soon to draw upon as a quarry for marble.

There were, as there are today, a few ancient Roman columns standing about the city, often in a broken condition, and remains of some of the old aqueducts were landmarks then as now. There were numerous cisterns to remind the Greeks of their past, but mostly derelict or used as gardens. Most impressive was the so-called "Sunken Palace", the great cistern built by Justinian near his palaces, which continues in modern use for its original purpose. The magnificent group of palaces near Santa Sophia was

already in ruins. The palace of Constantine Porphyrogenitus on the walls was an imposing edifice, and its skeleton still is. Blachernae, that famous pleasaunce and palace of the last dynasty, was then awaiting destruction in battle and of its splendours only the archaeologist can now find trace.

But the grandest monument of all dominated the city in 1403, as it does in 1953. For over nine centuries a centre of Christianity, and for nearly five centuries a mosque, today the magnificent structure of Santa Sophia is preserved by the Turks as a museum, one of the most beautiful and certainly the most interesting of all buildings in the world. But for the addition of the minarets and the Moslem pulpits and ornaments within, it stands as it was when the last Emperor watched the Papal Legate celebrate the Roman rite before the conquest; and here Mohammed the Conqueror came to thank Allah for his victory and order the church to be converted into a mosque.

Churches and monasteries were very numerous, forming the principal landmarks. Many of these survive. The Turks converted twenty-six churches into mosques, and so preserved their ancient beauties from destruction. In particular the magnificent mosaics of St Saviour in Khora (Karieh Jami) are now cherished as a museum. No doubt the Akemites were still singing the praises of the Lord by day and night in three shifts in three tongues in that grim old monastery of Studium, today but a wreck. Only the old church of St Mary of the Mongols (Moukhlotissa) still retains the unbroken tradition of Orthodox services.

As to the people, threatened without, they were divided within. There was but a small population, with limited resources and practically no hope of help from outside. In their despair, the people looked to heaven to protect the Well-Guarded City and spent more time in prayer and lamentation than in military preparation. Only at the end was there a flicker, when Constantine XI, surnamed Dragazes, aged forty-five, at the day of crisis by his dignity, resolution, courage and soldier's death redeemed the shame that his predecessors had brought upon the title of Emperor.

Constantine's city was much smaller than Istanbul today. It consisted only of the ancient town enclosed within the walls. The population of that area in the census of 1950 was 410,526. In the last days of the Empire it was barely more than one-tenth of that figure. For the city had never recovered from the



Latin occupation. There had been a great dispersal and whole quarters were abandoned. In the upper part there were gardens within the walls, olive-yards, windmills and fields of corn, as the people had more and more concentrated upon the shores of the Golden Horn and Marmara. The water-supply had decayed. In 1434 a great fire had wiped out most of the quarter of palatial Blachernae, where the Imperial palace was destroyed by fire at the conquest, and in 1435 a pestilence had swept the city. It is estimated that the whole population at the eve of the conquest did not exceed 50,000. This agrees fairly well with the statement that Mohammed took 60,000 prisoners, that is the whole population, as was the custom in those days.

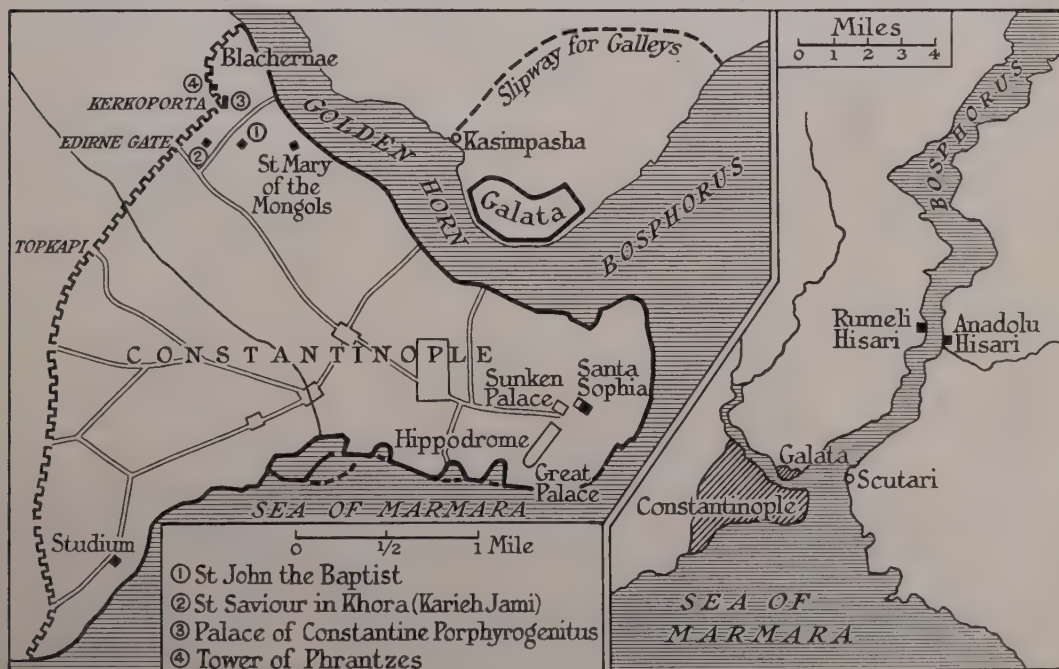
The population was very mixed. The ancient Roman element had long since been absorbed and the majority were Greeks or Graecized aliens. There were enough Armenians to have their own patriarch, and many attained high rank, even reaching the throne. There was a colony of Karaim, Greek-speaking Jews who do not recognize the Talmud, and the few hundred living today claim to be the only surviving element of the pre-conquest inhabitants. There was a number of Latins, mainly Italians engaged in trade. Venetians, Pisans and Amalfitans had their concessions near the Golden Horn. The Genoese were concentrated in their own concession at Galata, across the Horn, where they lived under their own *podestà*. They remained

neutral. There was a small Turkish enclave with its own mosque and kadi's court.

The first decade of the fatal century was peaceful for the ancient city. The successful brother in the Ottoman fratricidal war, Mohammed I, surnamed Chelebi, was a peaceful prince, with whom the Emperor Manuel found points of contact. They exchanged gifts and are said even to have dined together. But his son Murad II, who succeeded in 1421, was more energetic and three years later John VIII succeeded Manuel as Emperor. Almost at once Murad laid siege to the city, bringing up big guns, but unsuccessfully. Though the doom of the city was sealed, it was not dated.

Seeing that the situation was desperate John took the only course and went to Rome to beg help from his people's enemy. A Council was held at Florence, when Pope Eugenius IV promised help if the Roman and Orthodox Churches were united. The price was paid and the Pope kept his word. He raised a crusade of Poles, Hungarians, Germans and Wallachs, but Murad shattered them at Varna in 1438. Four years later Hunyadi made an effort to retrieve the disaster, but Murad crushed him too, on the field of Kossovo. To oppose the Turks in the Balkans there was now left only Skanderbeg, but in his remote and rugged mountains that sturdy Albanian was of no interest to the frightened Emperor in Constantinople.

In that same year Constantine XI, last of





*Courtesy of the Courtauld Institute*

*E.N.A.*





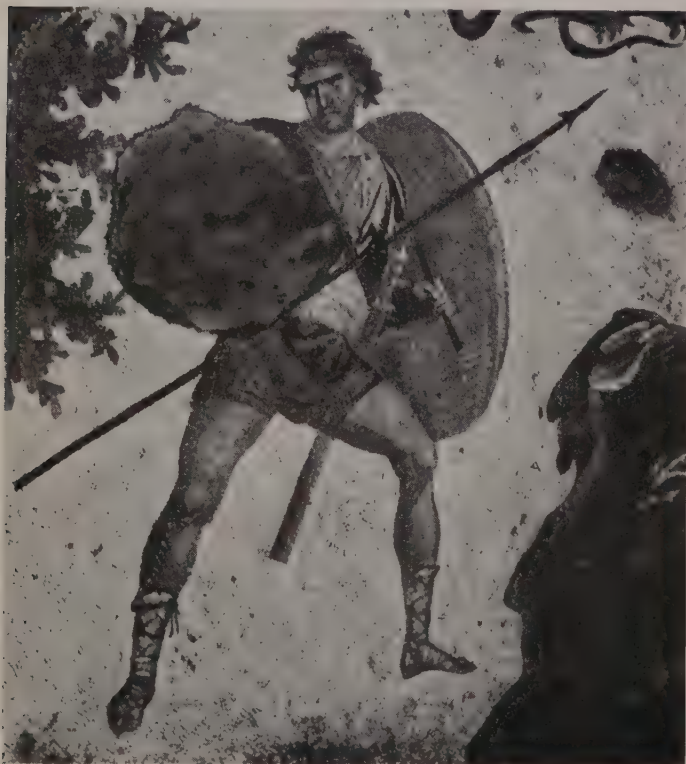


Anderson, from W. F. A.

(Opposite, top) Santa Sophia, built between 532 and 537 by Justinian, dominates the city of Constantinople today as it did when the Eastern Roman Empire fell five hundred years ago. (Opposite, bottom) Also begun in Justinian's time, Karieh Jami was one of the twenty-six churches converted by the Turks at the conquest to mosques, and so preserved from destruction. But for over two centuries the city had been slowly falling into ruin and a great deal of damage had already been done by the Crusaders. The Hippodrome was waste ground, its site marked by the Serpentine Column of Constantine the Great and the Obelisk of Theodosius (which still stand). The quadriga (above), once its ancient pride, was removed to Venice in 1204



*By courtesy of the Courtauld Institute*



(Above) *Justinian's Palace, overlooking the Sea of Marmara. Close by was the Great Palace, "virtually the hub of the civilized world" for eight centuries; its richness has recently been revealed by the excavation of some magnificent mosaics. Details of these superb decorations, which have been tentatively dated about A.D. 500 are: (left) a warrior; (opposite, top) spearmen attacking a tiger; (middle) leopards devouring a deer; (bottom) a pastoral scene of horses, herdsmen and goats*

*All reproductions of mosaics from The Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors (O.U.P.) by courtesy of The Walker Trust (University of St Andrews)*







N.A.

*The water-supply of Constantinople was secured by means of an elaborate system of aqueducts and over twenty vast cisterns. (Above) The Aqueduct of Justinian, six miles to the north-west of the city. (Below) The underground Basilica Cistern or "Sunken Palace". One of the biggest, it is still in use*

*courtesy of the Turkish Press Department*





the Emperors, mounted the throne of his ancestors. It must have been with sinking heart, for in 1451 he heard of the death of Murad and the succession of Murad's son, Mohammed II, young, capable, energetic and ambitious. His capital was at Edirne, but he wished to have it in Constantinople.

So, like his predecessors, Constantine went to Rome and accepted the union as the price. But the memories of Nicopolis and Varna had killed the crusading spirit in Europe and all the Pope could send was his Legate with a handful of men. In 1452 Cardinal Isidore, himself of Greek extraction, celebrated the liturgy in Santa Sophia. The service was conducted with the utmost grandeur in that august building. The Emperor attended with all the traditional pomp of Byzantium, accompanied by the Patriarch Gregory Mammias. But the sight of the Latin vestments and the sound of the Latin speech exasperated the Greeks. To the Emperor and Patriarch it must have been gall and wormwood, but to the people outside, led by thousands of monks, it was intolerable and they opposed it violently. The Duke Notaras cried: "Better the turban of the Turk than the hat of the Cardinal!"

Mohammed did not waste time. That same year he built the castle of Rumeli Hisari on the European shore of the narrow waters and thus cut off any hope of help from the north. The castle was designed to face attack from the land side, but that never materialized. His hands were free. The Emperor sent envoys offering to pay tribute. When these returned with a snub he set to work to prepare for the siege. He bricked up the gates, restored the walls, laid in stores of food and munitions, and amassed arms, stones, oil for burning and 'Greek fire'. On April 2 he laid the famous chain across the mouth of the Golden Horn, and sent bribes to two of Mohammed's generals, Halil Pasha and Shabahad Pasha, that they might dissuade the Sultan from so formidable a task. At the same time he held all Turks within the walls as prisoners. Whereupon Mohammed summoned him to surrender. The Emperor refused and the siege began.

The forces that Mohammed moved against the city were formidable: he seems to have had about 200,000 fighting men, including a powerful body of Janissaries and, what was even more fatal, the new siege-weapon tried by his father: big guns, firing great stone balls that battered and eventually shattered the millenary walls of Theodosius. On the sea side he had 150 galleys to maintain a blockade.

Against this Constantine had, according to de la Jonquière, but 4973 men under arms. These were reinforced by volunteers from the Genoese colony at Galata. But the Republic of Genoa was itself interested in the fate of Constantinople and sent a flotilla of five vessels under Giustiniani, who on arrival attacked the Ottoman fleet and scattered it. On April 21 he entered the city in triumph, to the joy of the people: with his 5000 men he doubled the strength of the defenders.

The Emperor's chief trust was in the great walls and the massive chain he had laid across the entrance of the Golden Horn. On the night of April 18-19 this held off an attack by the Turkish fleet. But it was unavailing, for the resourceful Mohammed hurriedly built a slipway over the hills on the north and hauled seventy-two galleys over the top down to the Golden Horn at Kasimpasha, thus outflanking the chain. With incredulous dismay the startled population saw the Ottoman vessels sliding down into their home waters, where they served as a base for a violent attack.

The principal defence was in the walls. These were in three sections: those along the Golden Horn, on the Marmara shore and the land walls. The total length is twelve miles, flanked by 400 towers and cut by fifty gates. The outer line of defence was the moat, 50 to 65 feet wide, divided by two lesser walls and two intervening spaces from the original wall of Theodosius, 10 to 13 feet thick at the base, 42 feet in height, with 96 towers of various designs. The weakest part was in the centre and there Mohammed pitched his tent and placed his biggest gun. The place is to this day called Topkapi, the Cannon Gate, and some of the original cannon-balls are preserved within.

Where the ground is steep and rocky there is no moat: here is the wall of Comnenus, which runs down the slope to the Golden Horn. The walls along the shore and on the Marmara were never so powerful, as the water was the great defence.

From the Edirne Gate to the skeleton of the palace of Constantine Porphyrogenitus the walls have been heavily battered by war and earthquake. It was in this part that a sally-port named Kerkoporta was left open, through neglect or treachery, on the night of May 27. Through it a band of fifty Janissaries broke in: they climbed the adjoining tower, planted the standard of the crescent upon it and sowed terror and panic among the inhabitants. Nearby is the tower called "of Phrantzes" from which the Emperor,



*The main fortifications of Constantinople consisted of the Land Wall (above) of Theodosius II, built in A.D. 413, from the Golden Horn to the Sea of Marmara. (Below) The Kerkoporta at the northern end of the Land Wall: the sally-port by which Mohammed's Janissaries entered on the night of May 27, 1453*







From the aut

*The sea walls (below) were less strong since the water itself was regarded as ample defence here, and Constantine XI placed a great chain across the entrance to the Golden Horn (above) which the Turks avoided by dragging their galleys overland behind Galata to launch them within the defended waters*

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*Mohammed II, the Conqueror, to whom Constantinople fell in May 1453 and with it the Byzantine empire. A portrait by his court painter, Sinan Bey*

by Armenians, by Greeks from various districts, and others. The newcomers knew nothing of the past and few cared. They set to work to repair the walls and to add new buildings. Yet the Ottoman conquest, viewed dispassionately, was not the unmitigated disaster it is usually depicted by European authors. Naturally, from the Christian point of view the conversion of a score of churches into mosques was a pollution, but the Greeks considered the Latin liturgy in Santa Sophia a pollution. In any case it preserved their fabrics for us to admire. The Orthodox clergy benefited greatly by the change. The Patriarch received widely extended powers and prestige, the pressure of Rome was removed and the hatred caused by the Crusaders' savagery lulled for five centuries. The Greek people found enlarged scope for their activities in commerce, banking, the law and administration, many attaining high

escorted by the chronicler Phrantzes, on the night of the fall of the city watched the Turks at work sapping his defences. Mohammed made a violent attack here, but without success. He offered generous terms to Constantine, but the Emperor defied him to the end, which came on May 29. The Emperor's body was found on the ramparts, recognized by his Imperial boots. Thus the great walls that had protected the city against twenty-five sieges, by Persians, Avars, Arabs, by Bulgars and by Russians, by Hungarians and by Turks, were finally breached, for the first and last time, by a young man of twenty-four.

With Constantine XI Dragazes Byzantium and the Middle Ages went down in a blaze of heroism. Constantinople fell for ever, and in its place arose Istanbul.

As Mamboury has pointed out, never again in history has there been so complete an interruption of tradition. All the inhabitants except the few Karaim were removed and immediately replaced, not by Turks only, but

posts as ambassadors and some, such as the Mavrocordatos, Cantacuzenes and others, even higher rank as hospodars of Wallachia and of Moldavia. It was by the Latins that the architectural beauties had been destroyed. The Turks preserved what they found and added many others. They restored the water-supply and removed for ever all dread of siege. Constantinople, for two centuries a defenceless tadpole, became once again a centre of artistic and educational activity, not according to our style, but none the less real. With restored prosperity, the population began to grow. Twenty-five years after the conquest it had risen to 70,000 and by the 16th century it had passed the 400,000 figure.

So the effete and squabbling dynasties of the Comneni and Palaeologi gave place to a young, vigorous and masterful power and the ancient city found itself once again fulfilling its role as metropolis of a vast and wealthy empire.



# Malta: a First Impression

by CHRISTOPHER KININMONTH

AN elaborate pendant of lights hanging from a broken chain and swinging eastwards in the darkness . . . a flurry of rain over the tarmac . . . confused impressions of ill-lit street corners, windows, the interiors of shops and scruffy bars : to come to an island by air is to come the wrong way. You have to experience the sea-crossing properly to understand the way in which an island is isolated. If you fly to it you have later to build up in yourself, before you can begin to understand the place, the sense of its apartness, to define around you the exact and uncompromising limits which the sea sets to it.

Yet if, for the traveller, the port is an entrance, for the island-born it is an exit also. That first evening we walked under the deep arches of the Porta Reale, into Valletta. After skirting the dramatic ruins of the opera house, the street climbed between the pretty Baroque fronts of Santa Maria della Vittoria and Santa Caterina d'Italia. The splendid, elaborate, tawny gold side of the Auberge de Castille faced us. The front of this palace is most noble, although ornate and architecturally decadent—the one palpable testament in Valletta to the decline of the Order of St John—but the splendour of it, fronting on a great open space on the bastions, creates a superb effect on the traveller seeing it as an islander first coming into town.

We went on into the small colonnaded garden called the Upper Baracca and stepped to the railed edge, the marvellously simple and grand slope of the bastions below and to either side of us.

You may miss a lot by not sailing into the Grand Harbour, being deprived of the discovery one by one of the long creeks between the Three Cities, but, coming this way in sight of the whole extent, you are rewarded with one of the world's very lovely sights disclosed with the suddenness of a vision. At night, by the lights, you can trace only the skeleton of the scene. It was not possible to be sure which lights shone from the land and

which from ships, and blue-black shadows made it hard to tell quite where the water reached. Yet I am glad to have seen it so for the first time. That night-time aspect held a promise of daytime beauty that magicked my sight to a tolerance of naval installations, barracks and hospitals, which might otherwise have irritated it. (Though, when I think of it, these are remarkably unexceptionable and the Navy can be congratulated on the little mess it has made.)

And I am glad we walked that night by St Paul's Street and down the stepped street of St Ursula, going past lighted shrines at the corners, down the stairway to the Marina. From the waterfront level I was surprised and charmed for the first time by the smallness of the scale of everything, that smallness which is a chief delight in Malta. Senglea, a picturesque jumble of a township on a point dividing two arms of the harbour, seemed a stone's throw away: only a little further off than the Dogana in Venice is from the Piazzetta; indeed, though the hills and bastions make it so unlike, by night or day you cannot quite rid yourself of the elusive likeness which the Grand Harbour has to Venice; perhaps it is only that here too the water makes, at most times, so admirable and prac-



A. J. Thornton

tical a waterway that the people build and live composedly, amicably, beside it.

Along the quay were lighted bars, noisy with gramophones and sailors ashore. Over several doorways were fretted Victorian lanterns bearing the names of lodging houses—The Iron Duke and the Golden Hind.

Windy sunshine in the morning. All the winds are sea winds and heady with salt. More than anything else it is the turbulent, tussling, frolicking, sultry winds which make one understand how small and exposed are these islands of Malta, Comino and Gozo.

Valletta has a sprightly charm by day. It is a bustling and energetic town of a startling handsomeness. I knew, vaguely, that it was an architectural masterpiece—"the richest plot of architectural ground in Europe . . . not richest in variety of style but in concentration of fine examples of a single coherent period," as Sir Patrick Abercrombie has written—but I was ill-prepared, and therefore the more delighted, to find what I did. A little city, about half a mile by a quarter, built over a high promontory and confined within a magnificent system of defensive walls and ditches; the streets laid out on a compact grid plan and lined with tall Baroque buildings: palaces, public and private, *auberges* of the Knights, churches, tenements. All, of whatever date, are distinctly Baroque, and even the meanest and most sadly degenerate, in a 19th- or 20th-century way, acknowledge the excellent standards set up at the time of the city's founding. Because La Valette, hero of the Great Siege and founder of the city, and his immediate successors, had little money to spare from defensive works, less probably (one is afraid) because the Religion's austere traditions still carried weight with the Knights of St John, old Valletta seems to have been built in a grandly simple version of the Baroque. Though so richly decorated inside, the Conventual Church of St John was deliberately modelled on its predecessor at Rhodes, so far, at any rate, as different building materials allowed. Its noble simplicity might be said to have set the tone for the city.

All this, built in a soft stone which weathers through a sand gold colour to an ochreish grey, contributes a noble setting—yet even more engaging is Valletta's metropolitan air. The smallness of the place, and of the society, gives this metropolitan air an intense, dashing and slightly comic flavour.

Nor had anyone prepared me for the extraordinary and singularly beautiful sight of the encircling hills on which you can see no earth, no green of fields, but only walls of the soft gold stone rising in tiers to the skyline, cluster-

ing to form villages of massed, flat-roofed houses over which, invariably, there stands a great church with twin belfry towers and a lantern-topped dome—gravely gay Baroque extravagances.

The hills are low, hardly rising above eight hundred feet anywhere in the island, and of long, smooth, wind-worn shapes, flattened on the tops. The astonishingly *architectural* landscape is speckled all over with stunted carobs, compact shapes so darkly green that they seem more like shadows or the mouths of caves than trees. They never stand up proudly in the pleasing, imaginative asymmetry of nature, and they never march on the horizon. In place of that variation which such natural features as woods and coppices afford most landscapes there are here only the agglomerations of cubes and rectangles which are the villages; in place of overtopping elms or planes are the bubbling domes and the pretty shapes of belfries. It is a nearly abstract landscape.

The small scale of the island is a constant source of wonder. The low hills are shaped to seem more imposing than they are, so that the eye is constantly tricked by false perspective. Valletta lies in an irregular basin of hills and it is never more than six miles to the horizon. In the clear air, which allows you to see in great detail at a long distance, you are never sure whether to be surprised to see so far so clearly, or whether what you see is surprisingly close at hand. Particularly tricky are those churches on the horizon: the long line of Mdina's walls, with the cathedral towering over them, looks close because its scale is bigger than that of nearer Zebbug, yet when you go up to this ancient city you are amazed to find its radius is only three hundred yards; the mushroom dome of Mosta church, third largest in the world, throws all sense of scale into hopeless confusion.

Only on the steep and harbourless western coast does the landscape alter, there and among the hillocks of the north-western Marfa district—where Military Bay lies, apparently transported from Cornwall.

Down in the Grand Harbour, lined with bastions, the grey ships dwarf the houses; again your sense of scale is jeopardized. Is it a huge harbour or not? A launch crosses to the star-shaped castle of San Angelo, and it is a magnificent size; H.M.S. *Eagle* noses in, and you wonder how she can manage it—though when she is berthed she becomes much less overwhelming.

The safest yardstick is the Maltese rowing boat, the *dghajsa* (the plural is *dghajjes*). A flotilla of them about Customs House Wharf





All Kodachromes by George F.

*The Maltese are necessarily very conscious of the sea around them and in some villages it is literally at their door as (above) at Marsaxlokk where it reaches almost to the steps of the Baroque church. (Below) Ghajn Tuffieha or Military Bay, one of the best and most popular of the island's few beaches*



brings back strongly that odd likeness to Venice. They are about as long as a gondola; though they must draw more water they float with the same lightness; more broad in the beam they yet look as fast; if less elegantly, their high prows and their slightly less high sterns emphasize their motion with the same deftness as a gondola's. But where a gondola is black as a limousine, a dghajsa is gay with colours inherited from who knows what fleets of antiquity. A fishing boat has, carved or painted on either side of the prow, the eye of Osiris by which to see its way. They are all painted with ranges and combinations of startling blues and greens set off with reds and yellows, but the more sophisticated lightermen put conservative tradition aside and let themselves go. *Charlie's* hull is painted with a pale green sea, flecked with tiny white sea horses, in which a flag-waving mermaid swims by the light of a blood red sun. The prow is brass-bound and wreathed in carven flowers held either side in the beaks of birds. The decking is of linoleum brilliantly painted with geometric patterns and flaunting, as does the flag at the stern, a

curious device which seems to be a cross between the fleur-de-lis and the Prince of Wales' feathers.

It is too early yet for me to gather what the Maltese attitude towards the sea may be, but there is no doubt that the islanders are very conscious of its presence. You cannot help noticing many small evidences of this awareness. The most striking is their fondness for the dolphin. And though there are dolphins on fountains, dolphins in courtyard gardens, on coats of arms and in the patterns of lace curtains, the best and most prevalent are the magnificent brass ones leaping downwards in pairs, as knockers, on hundreds of front doors. It is as though the Maltese, who have had scant opportunity to look on themselves as a people in the full, autonomous, arms-bearing sense, had quietly rejected such borrowed symbols as the plain or eight-pointed cross of the Knights, and, instead, taken for their own the lovely sea-going shape of the dolphin.

By good luck we arrived in time for an unexpected demonstration of Malta's association with the sea: the Festival of St Paul Shipwrecked. According to tradition St Paul was

*The dghajjes are as much a part of the scene in Valletta as gondolas in Venice and they are a great deal gayer. These, waiting for hire at the Customs House steps, are used to ferry passengers to ships lying in the Grand Harbour. The rowers stand, facing forward, their oars crossed*







*Fregatini in Marsaxlokk Bay. Their latini rig, used in sheltered waters, shows they are sailing for pleasure. Across the bay is Birzebuga, formerly a fishing village, now a summer resort*

shipwrecked on his way to Rome in the bay to the island's north-east called after him. During his enforced stay he founded the Church in Malta, and was naturally adopted as the island's patron saint.

The streets were decorated with lights and banners and festoons of paper and leaves; from the closed balconies of all the houses hung aprons of damask and velvet. On the night before the feast, crowds sauntered about, excited and noisy. Children let off fireworks and there were bands playing in the wind. "It is always stormy for St Paul's shipwreck," a friend said. The fine church of St Paul was hung all over with red damask, gold braided, and the silver treasure was displayed. There was a marvellous silver casing for each altar and such a quantity of huge candlesticks and reliquaries and silver bindings and chalices as you never thought to see.

All morning a great crowd pushed into the church to hear a part at least of the seven-hour service, sung by full choirs to the music of an orchestra. At four o'clock, when the processional route was tightly packed with people, the robed deacons left the church and

the banners of many organizations assembled in the street. The acolytes and the small servers made their obeisances to the altar and filed out; the bishop took a monstrance containing a bone from the Apostle's hand and followed them. Then there was a great shout, rude and charged with passion; we turned from the altar to look behind us. Melchiorre Gafá's splendidly carved and gorgeously painted figure of the saint was lifted on its base by a crowd of bearers; the high doors were opened to show sunlight and the flutter of decorations outside; St Paul moved to the opening with a strangely natural, light and lilting tread, for the figure is carved in motion and the bearers swayed under its weight. As the sunlight struck on his gilded red and green, the bells pealed and the whole church rocked with the explosion of hundreds of fireworks on its roof. In a snowstorm of confetti, St Paul, blessing the crowds as he went, passed out of sight on his journey round the town, the terrific cannonade accompanying him.

As we were going home a drunk broke away from his friends to brandish his fist and cry: "*Eviva La Valette!*"

# The Little-known Turkanas

by IRENE and WILLIAM MORDEN

IN our briefing before we left New York we had learned that while the collections from West Africa in The American Museum of Natural History were reasonably complete, there were great gaps in the comparable material from East Africa.

"It isn't just a collection of African art that we want," the Museum authorities had said. "What we especially need is a cross-section of the material possessions of some particular tribe. Africa is changing and we need a collection, as extensive and complete as possible, made up of those everyday objects that are now in use. Art objects will be preserved, but the ordinary utensils and implements, ornaments or even weapons will be discarded as valueless when the Africans adopt the white man's 'culture'."

The choice of a tribe had been left to us. After a considerable amount of investigation we had decided upon a little-known tribe, the Turkanas, living in the country west of Lake Rudolf not far from where Abyssinia, the Sudan and Kenya meet.

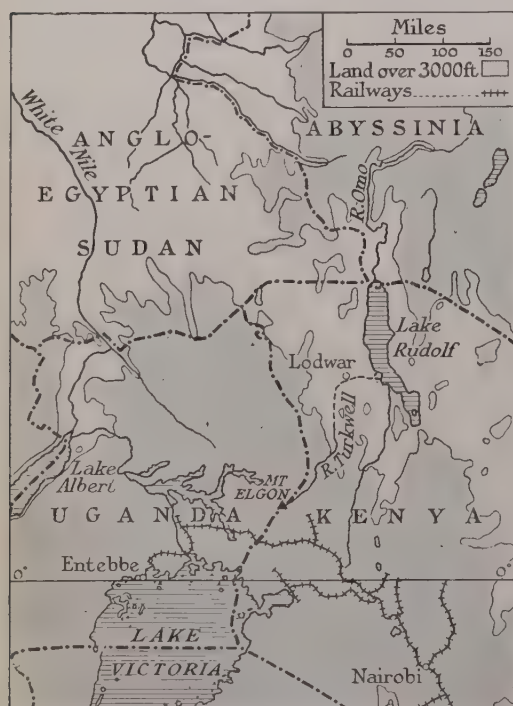
Now we were approaching that Turkana country. Arid to the point of being a desert,

and thinly populated by either human beings or game, the Turkana country might be called the least attractive region in all of Kenya. The narrow road we were following stretched its crooked length across the steep face of an escarpment some 7000 feet down to the stony plains of the Great Rift Valley. As we drove the country became much drier and the so-called road ever more difficult. Bouncing, swaying and jolting, we plunged and bumped across any number of "sand luggers"—dry beds of streams—until we reached the very grandfather of them all. It was a bed of treacherous white sand three hundred yards wide shimmering in the oppressive heat. A part of the way across, the trail had been improved with the branches of trees laid corduroy-fashion, and only so far as the corduroy extended were we able to keep going. No sooner had the car left the uncertain surface of these branches than it churned axle deep into the sand; it was firmly stuck.

Our driver, one of the safari boys, raced his engine hopefully and we pushed. Wheels spun and the car merely settled more firmly. We needed help badly, but where to find it? Apparently there was no life within miles. Since reaching the valley floor we had seen nothing but rocks, sand and thorn trees. Nevertheless, in this bare and desiccated country we were about to have our first contact with the Turkanas we had come so far to see.

There was little to obscure the near view and there seemed to be nothing behind which it would have been possible for anyone to hide. Yet, to our surprise, men that we had failed to see now began to appear. For the most part they were utterly naked. A few were wearing loose, toga-like robes of brown cloth picturesquely knotted on their shoulders. Every one of them had some fantastic head-dress. Their hair, heavily daubed with mud, was arranged on their heads in bun-like masses to which ostrich plumes gave a final decorative touch and they wore leg bands of gazelle hide, necklets of beads and wire, earrings, bracelets, and lip plugs made of ivory or metal. We felt some apprehension as they ploughed towards us, cloaks blowing off shining black shoulders in the hot breeze.

They were smiling. The leader greeted us from afar with "Jambo", a Swahili word meaning "How do you do?" Swahili is the







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All photographs by the Morden African Expedition

Cattle form the basis of the 'Turkanas' wealth. (Above) A large herd at a water hole in the dried-up bed of a river. (Below) In addition they keep sheep, goats, donkeys and camels, which are well suited to the climate and country. In spite of the poor grazing they flourish; the sheep and goats especially

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Kodachrome

*Natural water holes are rare in the arid country inhabited by the Turkanas, who dig wells varying from five to twenty feet in depth in the beds of the usually dry streams. From the bottom of these pits the water is handed up in bowls by girls who pour it into wooden troughs from which the herds drink*



Kodachrome





Kodachrome

*Turkana herdsman with their donkeys. Herds are usually tended by men and boys, but women milk the animals and water them, sometimes helped by small boys. Milk forms an important part of their diet*

lingua franca of East Africa, but the Turkanas in this remote area do not speak it as a usual thing. Promptly we called out "Jambo" in reply. As the group drew nearer, their dignified leader gestured respectfully to Bill and said "Jambo, Papa." He turned to the only woman in the party with the same greeting. Then in consternation he realized that he was speaking to a white woman dressed like a man in khaki coat and trousers, but with true native tact he murmured quickly "Jambo, Mama" thus retrieving the situation. We all laughed and after that it was not necessary to ask for assistance. It was given freely.

As if thoroughly experienced in rescuing automobiles from sand luggers, these tall black men turned to with a will to dig us out of the sand with their bare hands. One who had a better idea than the others of how much digging it would take, ran in the broiling sun to their little village out of sight to get a couple of shovels that must have been rare and valuable implements among these simple people. After an hour or so the car, assisted by strenuously pushing natives, finally climbed out of the sand trap and crept across the rest

of that treacherous dry stream bed to firmer ground. Our first contact with these once warlike Turkanas had been a pleasant and interesting one.

The post of Lodwar, which we reached a few hours later, the administrative centre of an area many thousand square miles in extent, is on the Turkwell River which is dry during most of the year, but in its bed—as the Turkanas learned long ago—wells can be dug. In fact, throughout this arid region, life revolves about the limited supplies of water, and Lodwar is no exception to the rule. Its scattered structures—the District Commissioner's house and administrative offices, the huts serving as barracks for the native police, the little fort, and one or two others—occupy a considerable area of slightly elevated land not far from the dry stream bed.

Looking out over the surrounding sandy wastes from the rocky flat-topped hill on which the station is situated, several old volcanic cones stand silhouetted against the sky. A few conical little hills rise irregularly here and there, and the harshness of that waterless land is softened by many astonishingly large





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*Turkanas enjoy dancing. Sometimes they jump; stiff-legged, to the sound of monotonous chanting. Sometimes they form a circle, raising great clouds of dust as they stamp back and forth. Dances, often lasting for days, may represent hunting or pastoral subjects, and some dances are meant to bring good luck*

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thorn trees with their limited greenness grayed with dust.

We set up our camp in a grove of spreading thorn trees not far from the main well in the river bed. The site was convenient to the Government "Boma"—the District Commissioner's administrative offices—and we set off to pay our first call on the officials in charge of the district.

We were cordially received by District Commissioner Whitehouse and by two other Government officials who happened to be there at the time instead of on tour in the district, the Superintendent of Police and a "Locust Control" officer. From them we learned again that we were far off the beaten path in a land to which few outsiders ever came. Only a handful of white men, we were told, and only three white women had ever visited Lodwar before.

A member of the "tribal police" was designated to accompany our party—a handsome, sturdy chap named Loichamba, who possessed a physique that would be the envy of any athlete. His uniform consisted of a neat blue kilt edged with red, bearing at one side of the front the letters T.D. for Turkana District. Loichamba came to be fully as useful as he was ornamental, and all the time he was with us was a real help.

At Lodwar we were within forty-five miles of Lake Rudolf, one of the world's least known extensive bodies of water. Unlike other great lakes in East Africa, it has no outlet. Lying some 250 miles north-east of Lake Victoria, and reaching northward into Abyssinia, it is fed by the Omo River, by smaller streams that flow in from the north, and by the Turkwell River which rises on the northern slopes of Mount Elgon and flows towards Lodwar during the rainy season. Its alkaline waters are somewhat unpleasantly drinkable. And it is shrinking slowly,

constantly losing by evaporation just a little more than it gains from the streams that feed it. Again, unlike most of Africa's other great lakes, the environs have little to recommend them. Thus it is not surprising considering its remoteness and the harshness of the surrounding country that Lake Rudolf, which was only discovered in 1888, is so little known and so seldom visited.

On the third day after our arrival at Lodwar we started for the lake with two safari cars and one truck. In many places the road was a mere track, but a month or so earlier the Commissioner had driven over the route and we followed his faint trail. It was well along in the afternoon before we came finally to a halt amid the sand and scrub a mile and a half from the water's edge. We had gone as far as our cars could take us.

We were bound for a little fishing camp that an earlier Commissioner had built on the end of a long sand-spit. To reach it we had to cross the intervening stretch of water in a

*A member of the Turkana Tribal Police. He wears a magnificent head-dress of ostrich plumes and an ivory plug the size of a golf ball is thrust into his lower lip*



small flat-bottomed boat.

There in the scrub it was fiercely hot. We stood wondering how we were going to get all our supplies to the lake shore before sundown. Then suddenly—and just as before—a considerable gathering of Turkanas appeared from nowhere. No sooner did they learn that our duffle had to be carried to the lake than they eagerly volunteered for the work. Even the women and children wanted to help. So shortly we were on our way with bundles and packages of all shapes and sizes balanced on every mud-daubed head. When we reached the lake we had to wade out for fifty yards to the skiff, and many trips were necessary before our luggage and ourselves were finally delivered beside the thatched huts on the sand-spit. Our arrival startled into the air thousands of bright pink flamingoes and big white pelicans. As these great birds wheeled and fluttered above the sand-spit and over the vividly blue water of the lake, they seemed to shimmer in their flight until it was hard to distinguish one bird from another.

Dinner that evening—and all the other meals we had while we were there—consisted of dozens of freshly caught tilapia. Tilapia are perch that exist in the lake in enormous numbers, and some varieties grow to immense size. A hundred-pound Nile perch is not uncommon, and we were assured that others even larger had been caught near this camp although the small fish are thought to be more tasty. The fact that Nile perch are common in land-locked Lake Rudolf suggests that once it had an outlet into the Nile.

Strange that a region offering so little in vegetation should be so rich in life that is dependent upon these alkaline waters. Never for a moment could we fail to be conscious of the myriad birds. A list of those actually seen included more than a score: flamingoes, pelicans, cormorants, egrets, ibis, gulls, plovers, herons, fish eagles, marabou storks and lesser storks as well, Egyptian geese and others. Then there were several unidentifiable species. The fish can be caught readily with seines and fish traps and that may explain the presence of the crocodiles. Any number of them floated silently past not far from shore. None of them visited the sand-spit while we were there, but we found their eggs in the sand, and they must regularly come ashore in large numbers. Hippos, too, were rising and sinking from time to time out in the lake. Often they seemed to be watching us. The natives assured us that these huge creatures were merely inquisitive and were kindly disposed towards visitors. Certainly they had no

hesitation about coming ashore near camp during the night. We heard them grunting after dark quite close at hand, and found their tracks within thirty feet of the huts.

The morning we started back for Lodwar the local Turkanas were waiting for us on the shore. Again they helped us carry our belongings to the cars which had been left amid the sand and scrub. This particular group, we were told, had been unable, because of the aridity of the region in which they had formerly lived, to care for themselves. Consequently, they had been listed by the Government as registered paupers, and brought here to the shore of Lake Rudolf in order to be taught to fish. Oddly enough, these Turkanas were not inclined at first to draw to any degree upon this supply of food. Thus, in the comparative absence of other food supplies, some suffered from dietary deficiencies but these have now been largely corrected by the use of more fish, and especially of fish livers which, in the past, the Turkanas had discarded. Their general health had thus been improved and under the direction of a native Government-trained "fishing expert" these people are now learning to live—and to live reasonably well—on fish, together with such products as the nuts of the dom-palm which they grind and cook. Pitifully poor, their only commercial product is a little rough camel rope which they make from the fibres of the palm. Unable to buy the strong trade tobacco which they like, they were pathetically grateful for thirty pounds of the stuff we distributed among them.

On the trip back to Lodwar we saw no game except a herd of Grant's gazelle, but a great many camels were scattered about the landscape. They were grazing almost everywhere, and as we passed those nearest stared stupidly before ambling off at their sloppy, shuffling gait.

In the short period since we had arrived we had made an excellent start on our collection of spears, knives and shields, of earrings and nose plugs, of anklets, necklets and various other bits of decoration, costume and equipment including a few of the choice ivory lip plugs which formerly were passed down from father to son.

The Turkanas are thought to have come into the region from higher land to the west only about a hundred years ago. Today, scattered over some 35,000 square miles, they number about 75,000. A nomadic life is necessitated by the aridity of the country. They are divided into some sixteen territorial groups, but their divisions and sub-





(Above) *At Lodwar the District Commissioner's house and Administrative Offices, which are built of native-made brick, dominate the other scattered structures in this lonely waste of sand and scrub.*  
 (Below) *Turkana awis are temporary shelters of branches, leaves and grass. Within a circular fence are clustered several living and sleeping huts inhabited by family groups, and kraals for the animals*





*Turkanas fishing in the shallow waters of Lake Rudolf. The men form a rough circle and work gradually inshore; each carries a large wicker basket which is plunged into the water at intervals*

divisions do not end there. Twenty-eight different "blood groups" based on paternal relationships and other organizations variously subdivide the widely scattered tribe. And the villages are in reality not villages at all. Always temporary, with their structures no more than crude shelters of branches, leaves and grass, they are inhabited only by family groups—a man with his wives and children—and such other relatives as may be homeless. No group includes more than a score or two.

The men are often very tall, many being well over six feet. These taller individuals are inclined to be very slender, but there are others who are noticeably shorter, and also sturdier, more muscular, with much more pronounced Negroid characteristics. Such a man was Loichamba. In general, the women are four or five inches shorter than the men.

The Turkanas subsist for the most part on their cattle, sheep, goats, camels and donkeys. Although the grazing is poor cattle are found throughout the valley and probably they formed the basis of Turkana wealth. Sheep,

goats, camels and donkeys are all well-suited to the climate and country and all four flourish: in the case of sheep and goats, so much so that their rate of increase is causing the authorities some worry.

All their livestock is milked, except the donkeys, and milk forms one of the most important parts of the Turkanas' diet. They drink it fresh and curdled and make a liquid butter, which they call by the Hindustani word *ghee*, by churning it in a wooden jug with skin ends; it is eaten and also used to grease the body.

Blood is an important addition to their milk diet. The animal to be bled has a noose put around its neck and pulled fairly tight causing the veins of the neck to swell. A vein is punctured by a metal-bladed arrow shot from a small crude bow held a few inches from the animal's neck. This is the only use the Turkanas make of the bow and arrow. After the vein is punctured the blood is caught in a wooden bowl and stirred with a stick as it flows; it is either mixed with milk or con-



sumed fresh by itself. As much as half a gallon of blood may be drawn off at one time from a cow or a camel, and the animal is not bled again for two or three months.

The men and boys tend the herds, whereas the women milk and water the animals. Sometimes very small boys would help the women with their tasks, but the boys do not continue to do so after adolescence. In the absence of natural water holes in much of the Turkana country, wells are dug in the beds of the usually dry streams. Although water is sometimes found in holes no more than five or six feet deep, we saw several that went down twenty feet or more.

The country is ill-adapted to agriculture and the Turkanas pay almost no attention to it, British administrators having been unable to interest them so far in extending their vegetable diet. Even along the beds of streams where a few things could be grown they raise nothing but a little Kaffir corn. The dom-palm and a few berry bushes provide them with food.

Turkana villages or *awis* are rarely in one place for more than two or three months.

*Turkanas are not normally a fishing people, but the Government has established two settlements on the lake where they are taught to fish. This provides extra food and corrects diet deficiencies*

Their houses are little more than rough brush shelters, with a low, dome-shaped bower which is covered with skins or long grass if it is available. A few feet away is a larger shelter, seven to nine feet high, shaped like a large dome cut in half. Each wife has a similar set of these shelters, which she builds for herself. The smaller one is used by the women and children as a sleeping hut and the larger provides shelter from the sun and a place to work during the day. Because of the dry air and frequent moves, the villages stay reasonably clean and free from flies.

When they decide to move to better browsing areas, all personal effects and household equipment are loaded on the backs of donkeys and the move takes place. As a result of these frequent moves the landscape is dotted with abandoned villages.

The weapons carried by the men are comparable to those carried by other East African tribes. The spears are generally from seven to nine feet in length. The shaft is made of wood, and the tip of the handle, as well as the leaf-shaped blade, is made of iron. Usually these spears are carried in well matched pairs,



and when not in use, the points are protected by leather covers. Every man also carries a club not unlike a hockey stick. Many of the men wear wickedly effective knives consisting of curved blades attached to rings worn on the middle fingers of the right hand. Circular knives, too, are often worn bracelet-like on the right wrist, and are ordinarily protected by leather sheaths.

Life is not easy in this remote land, but the Turkanas in general seem to be happy and good-natured. Among their limited pastimes, dancing is by all odds the favourite. They have dances during the day, and they have them at night. At times they even have dances that last for days without let-up. There are hunting dances and war dances, dances that have to do with their herds—and their wives—and others that are meant to bring good luck. In all of them everyone seems tireless. One of the most interesting we saw was at Lodwar. The story of the dance was a pastoral one, and both men and women took part.

This dance began in the late afternoon, and it took some time for the dancers to warm up. There were about a hundred of them who had been invited to Lodwar from the country round about. Among the men were many wearing clusters of pink, white and orange plumes, and some also wore short goatskin aprons, wooden sandals, necklets, and pendants of beads and ivory. However, save for the usual cloak of brown cloth knotted above the right shoulder, or possibly an abbreviated skirt of cloth made by wrapping a length of cloth about the middle and tucking the end in at the waist, most of them were naked. Some wore wide arm bands of metal, and other decorations of copper wire and cowrie shells. Great lip plugs of ivory, bone or metal were thrust through their lower lips.

The women wore goatskin aprons, front and back, and were copiously decorated with great metal hoops or discs in their ears, with necklets of beads and ostrich shell, and anklets of iron. They, also, wore lip plugs, though these were much smaller than those of the men. Some of them—as long and thin as cigarettes—were made of copper wire and of aluminium melted down from pots and pans procured at the *duka* or Indian trading store of which there was one in Lodwar. Their heads were shaved on either side leaving a centre section of hair. This had been smeared with fat, and wound into tight little curls which sometimes hung over the ears and forehead almost like a shiny rope fringe.

Their dance consisted mostly of jumping and chanting, the men jumping stiffly up and

down and alternating their jumps with those of the women who faced them in line. There was a monotonous chanting which would continue for a time, and then die down into comparative silence, after which it would begin again. The dancers, however, did not confine themselves to this exclusively. Presently they began their Elephant Dance, which must have originated long ago, for elephants are no longer to be found in this region. Here the men formed a curving line, each one waving an arm in sinuous imitation of an elephant's trunk. Now and again, in the more active periods of the dance, the men would rush at the women who surrounded them, and everyone would shout excitedly. As the women moved about they often coquettishly flipped up their goatskin aprons in the men's faces. The children, who took no real part in the dance, stood about watching the proceedings. When the rhythm became irresistible they ran and jumped beside the dancers, who paid little attention to them. It was surprising to us that even we began to feel the dramatic pull of that strange jumping and chanting.

Mr Whitehouse and Loichamba took us directly in among the milling throng for a close-up. Clouds of dust were raised by the beating of many bare feet. The noise of the now continuous chanting made any comments impossible. The dancers did not stop even for a minute, nor did they offer any objection to our presence. In fact, the six-foot warriors pushed one another aside so that we could see what was going on in the middle of the circle, which had been formed by the dancers holding hands. Every now and then a man, stamping, jumping and darting about inside the ring would choose a woman and pull her in beside him. She, in turn, would grab a male partner to the accompaniment of much yelling and laughing as they pushed one another about in rough play.

Later that evening, as darkness fell, we went back with Mr Whitehouse. From the flat roof of his house we looked out across the desert-like country, so fascinating in the strangely white equatorial moonlight. In the distance, with their fires still glowing redly through the night, the Turkanas were going on with their dancing and shouting. Even when we had thanked our host for all his help and returned to our camp under the great spreading thorn trees, the dance continued. As we fell asleep, snug in our bedrolls, we could still hear the faint and rhythmic native cadences.

*(Based in part on the field notes of R. Kepler Lewis, anthropologist to the Morden African Expedition.)*



# New Villages in Spain

by GEORGE BILAINKIN

*Four roads, nicely planted, well laid out, lead to the heart of Brunete. They are sufficiently wide for a car yet provide a feeling of intimacy*

BRUNETE has not yet really awakened from its nightmare. The 800 inhabitants might be a day's journey from luxurious, hurrying Madrid, instead of only half an hour. Yet Brunete changed the history of Spain. Republicans struggled here in July 1937, and lost. Thousands of Spaniards, Russians and Poles, Yugoslavs and Germans, Frenchmen and Italians, Britons and Greeks uttered their last words on the soil here. And here their bones rest.

It is quiet now in Brunete. The memories of battles, of the despair of the Nationalists when the Italians were defeated at Guadalajara, are like disturbed ashes in the wind. The people of the new Brunete seem conscious of the men who died there fighting for their beliefs, whether republicanism or nationalism or communism.

Now the living share a new world. Brunete may lead the slothful everywhere to provide new villages. In an instant you are conscious of plan, planners, planning. What vigour lies behind the brilliant simplicity of Brunete! Here is thought solely for the inhabitants. The large neat square is the heart of Brunete. It beats quietly but rhythmically. Grouped together on all four sides are the shops: the grocer, butcher, greengrocer, fishmonger, hairdresser, post-office, trade-union office, café, dance-hall and police station. The women of Brunete do not need to run into doorways when it rains: they are protected by arcades.

Rents are really low. Some villagers pay 35 pesetas (about 7s.) a month, others as much as 75 pesetas, for three or four rooms with three



*All photographs from the author*

balconies overlooking the square. The best costs 110 pesetas and is quite large. Daily farm wages vary, but 30 pesetas is an average. If food be included, the total is lower.

Black cows were grazing below the veranda of the trade-union office as I enjoyed a drink. The silence of the road was broken spasmodically by the song of birds, by the laughter of a man near two dogs chasing a playful, unfrightened hen. A longer silence was disturbed, enriched by the bells of cows approaching stalls at close of day.

I spoke to the village priest, Don Angel, who told us he had come to Brunete thirteen years ago. Only a tiny part of the town remained standing then, at the end of the Civil War.

As I was leaving the village with a thousand ghosts in every garden, I heard little boys crying out, "Don Angel, Don Angel." "They are hurrying me for the evening service in church," he explained. "They don't want me to be late." As I drove back to Madrid, I continued to hear the bells of cows in Brunete—monotonous, mellow.



*Houses in Brunete are cosy and comfortable, with spacious rooms and good gardens. Though by no means grand, they afford an enviable lead to innumerable villages in richer countries elsewhere*

Having visited one type of new village, I now thought I would like to see another : the experiments in agricultural settlement in the arid Extremadura on the Portuguese border, where there are remains of Phoenician and Greek cities.

Spain is an agricultural country, with half her 29,000,000 people living by the soil. Today it is the third largest cereal-producing state. But the irrigation system known to Moors and Jews is not always kept up. Parts are desperately poor, thanks to bad soil, insufficient rain, lack of suitable fertilizer. Before the Republic, General Primo de Rivera began a campaign for enriching the soil. He set up irrigation systems, introduced settlements. The work was maintained even during the latter part of the Civil War, and was continued by two Ministers of Agriculture in General Franco's government. But it is generally agreed that when the Duke of Primo de Rivera, the General's surviving son, now the Spanish Ambassador in London, became Minister in 1941 he gave a fresh impetus to agricultural reform.

"I recognized," His Excellency told me in

London recently, "how urgent was the need for settling men on the soil. I wanted them to be taught the importance of technical knowledge and skill. I wished them to enjoy work on farms. I realized the need for private enterprise on farms, and for encouragement of good workers as well as the removal of people not interested in their possessions. We ensured that land was made cultivable, and that men assumed a new pride in the soil of their birth."

Before his departure in 1945 for another post, the Duke had strengthened the foundations of the Institute of Colonization, under the Ministry of Agriculture. The present Minister has carried on the Duke's work. Don Rafael Cavestany may be thanked, in part, for the progress recently achieved. About 900,000 acres have been declared of national agricultural interest and plans covering 715,000 acres have been approved. No fewer than 30,000 farmers have been settled, 20,000 on "dry" land, 7000 on land in need of irrigation. Already thirty new villages have been completed, with about 2200 new houses (for about 14,000 inhabitants). When the scheme





(Above) A patio beside the village church of Brunete. Out of its 800 inhabitants, 700 attend services regularly. (Below) Don Angel, for thirteen years parish priest of Brunete, in the village carpenter's shop, discussing repairs for his church. His relationship with the villagers is informal and friendly



is completed, eighty-three new villages with 9000 new houses will have been built.

How sadly and urgently Spain needs economic aid from the United States and from everybody else who can offer it and is willing to extend it, became clear to me during the journey from Madrid to Badajoz. Perhaps I own an acquired sense of defeatism when I study the poor remnants of cottages, houses, streets, villages and towns, but the conclusion is inescapable that a vast, vigorous effort is needed in all countries that have suffered wars in recent years, to tidy up, and to present a decent picture to the nation as well as to visiting foreigners.

There were plenty of depressing scenes and warnings during the journey. It began at 8.30, when Madrid was hurrying to work and the donkeys and the mules moved lazily from outlying villages and suburbs to the capital. The lanes outside Madrid are often cluttered up with remnants of walls of the kind to be met in one of the wealthiest cities in the world. But if mighty London continues to risk the shame of gaping voids all around St Paul's, exactly twelve years after the bombing, Madrid need not be embarrassed over a delay of fifteen years.

We avoided the town of Toledo and drove at a great speed along indifferent roads towards Portugal, arriving at our destination six hours later. My mind was full of statistics provided by my guide, Señor Carlos Casado. Settlers, he said, are each given two cows, one mare, a sow, seeds and implements. For the time being the colonist, or settler, pays nothing. Many, however, do so well with the produce of the farm that in two or three years they have repaid their debt to the Ministry of Agriculture. Normally they would become the owner of their house and land inside twenty-five years, but often they are on the way to achieving this object in ten.

Soon I was in the centre of the settlement zone around the canal of Montijo. This was declared of national importance some years ago and covers 37,000 acres. Almost the whole of it belongs to private owners, who have the right to ask the Institute of Colonization for a reserve of land, no greater than 271 acres. They must, however, irrigate the land, with the aid of the Institute which provides money and technical skill, so that within five years the farm is in production. If the landlords fail to have the farm well irrigated the Institute expropriates the land, at a price to be settled, for distribution among selected workers. Land here, which is not included in the area reserved for owners, is described as

being "in excess". This is taken by the Institute and divided among the settlers in farms of nine to ten acres and in the case of clerks and other non-professional settlers in allotments of one acre. In Montijo, "lands in excess" total about 13,000 acres which will satisfy 1500 families.

Three wholly new villages have been or are being built in the zone, as well as new roads. Each village is capable of extension, and is placed in the centre of the area worked by the settlers. Intelligent planning has ensured that the maximum distance to be walked to the fields by any settler shall not exceed a mile and a half. The new villages are Guadiana del Caudillo (finished), Valdelacalzada (finished) and Pueblonuevo del Guadiana (nearing completion).

Near Valdelacalzada, the village we were to see, is a school for agricultural settlers run by the Institute of Colonization. I was shown round this school and its farms by Señor Mariano Dominguez, agricultural engineer and director of the Institute's regional office in Badajoz. We watched the men around the silo preparing forage. Half the silo, the lower part, is used for maize. Bulls appeared to enjoy life tied next to the cows in carefully constructed, well-lit, whitewashed stalls. Spanish-bred bulls are frequently added to by imported stock, to maintain the strain.

I was impressed by the cleanliness of the machinery, of the cows, of the pig-sties, which in general follow modern practice.

I spoke to one of the farm workers at the school, who told me his wage as a sub-engineer was 35 pesetas a day. He is provided with house, light, and some food at cost price. This, I was told by the man himself, is valued at the cost of production. Since January 1953 he has been paid 40 pesetas a day and is entitled to two weeks' holiday with pay. The food provided includes bread, milk, vegetables, and the indispensable olive oil.

The village of Valdelacalzada is Señor Dominguez' special baby, and extremely proud of it he is—with good reason. Here 500 people have begun life anew with fresh hopes and resolution. In the far distance I had pointed out to me the barrage and the dam for the irrigation of the zone, also the neatly cut grooves that will help to produce food where now the land is dry and barren.

Señor Dominguez assured me that he is to increase the number of houses in Valdelacalzada from 113 to 350; there are 250 in Guadiana del Caudillo and Pueblonuevo del Guadiana will have the same.

I met the village priest who took us to see





*The Institute of Colonization's School of Agriculture at Montijo. Successful students at this school obtain not only farming land but a house in a new village with any needed agricultural annexes and implements, seeds, fertilizers, one working cow, one milk cow, one mare and one sow*

one of his parishioners, Señora Bernarda Alvarez. Unaffected by the sudden intrusion of priest, British guest, Ministry guide, two local teachers and a senior official, she told us that she had had twenty children. The farm they had obtained was valued at 50,000 pesetas. "How do the family sleep?" I asked. Four girls in one convent and two in another. Nine children live in the house, and the balance lodge with relatives in a second. A new house was now being specially built so that all the children could be accommodated under one roof. She announced that she was perfectly happy, adding there were three families in the village each blessed with ten children. The tone in which she dismissed the "ten children" demonstrated that this achievement, in her judgment, was second-rate!

Sociologists, eager to examine the reason for our "cosh-boys" could do worse than visit this isolated Spanish village. They might watch the carefree children, bereft of shot-guns, lacking the lust for blood, happy even though they are unable to enjoy the privilege of spending every Sunday evening watching

costly imported gangster films.

Life may be hard here, for I saw few shops open, and the clothes of the men and women would scarcely have aroused envy in a modest British village. It is certainly full for the priest who takes his tasks seriously, and, for the assistant school teacher, Maria Josefa Barainca, who begins another job every evening. She then has to teach adults the rudiments of reading, writing and spelling in a new school lacking elementary necessities like penholders, ink and exercise books. All, however, will be provided shortly. Meanwhile, blackboards serve for instruction.

Dusk was falling when we returned to the central hall of the Institute school. Señor Dominguez stood in the middle of a group of new arrivals, who were due to start their training two days later, on Monday. "You are beginning a new life," he told them.

One of the students asked what games were provided in the lounge. In an instant the tense reply came from another learner: "For the moment what is important is to improve our study here." The oldest of the students was



*Life begins anew for thousands of Spanish farm-workers in the new villages being built by the Institute of Colonization. (Above) A general view of Valdelacalzada, one of those already completed near the Portuguese border. The village priest (left) chatting with some of his parishioners*



*Adjoining the church at Valdelacalzada are the shops and principal offices as well as the trade union headquarters where the villagers can meet for dances, films and lectures*

thirty-five, the youngest twenty. All had arrived from the district of Badajoz, and all were peasants.

Señor Dominguez pointed out that the officials of the Institute select the settlers in the villages. If the chosen settlers do not work well at school, they cannot pass their examinations and do not qualify for house and stock.

The manager of the tutorial farms and school showed me his quarters. The house has a model sitting-room, study-cum-office, dining-room, three bedrooms, a servant's bedroom, and bathroom, with a good shower as well as bath. The kitchen is next to a good larder and box-room. The Institute provides the house, neat and well-made furniture, light, coal and food produced on the farm (at cost price).

My bedroom was cosy and adequate, but shortage of water led to complicated discussions about the indispensable bath in the bathroom on Sunday morning. It was decided that the water must be prepared in the adjoining Institute kitchens and be brought over in impressive containers. I concluded that my life-long programme of daily bath in jungle or city would not suit the Extremadura hostel. An excellent breakfast, of fried eggs and quantities of butter on good wholesome bread, prepared me for the return journey.

In the car I reflected on this neo-socialist experiment being tried by Franco Spain. If more money could be provided, tens of thousands of peasants could be found new homes, in new villages, around newly established farms. Spain needs an agricultural revolution, but this cannot be achieved without large credits and capital. The village experiment deserves imitation, not only in Spain but in many parts of the wealthier world.

General Franco strives, as did General Primo de Rivera, to deal with land hunger, appalling housing conditions, low wages, irreducible poverty. The dust bowls of Spain remind me of the warning of Nature—the once-



wealthy fields of Saudi Arabia now a dark and sinister desert of stark, terrifying mountains. General Franco appears to be dealing with the highly combustible material gradually. Some day a solution for these ills will have to be found, sooner rather than later.

Yet the scene in the Institute church is an important last lesson of my visit. All the students had risen early this Sunday morning. All waited outside the church door for the service to begin. Life in rural Spain revolves about the church. It would be dangerous to ignore this fact. The church in Spain has stressed the need for a vigorous attack on poverty. May be this is a reason for its hold in 1953 on so many Spaniards. It would be inaccurate to suggest that I found visible sparks of much value, or signs of smouldering fire. The misery left by the Civil War is intense. I witnessed cold ashes in the wind. And I plead for a thousand new Brunetes—while there is time, a thousand new Badajoz settlements while only cold ashes rise in the wind. Brunete can be a bridge from Spain to Europe.



# The Port of London

by ROBERT SINCLAIR

Photographs by PHILIP BOUCAS

It is odd that neither the royal arms of England nor the arms of the ancient City of London should include the flowing blue lines that indicate in heraldic language the ocean wave. It was left to the London County Council, a modern administrative machine devised in a set of committee-rooms a lifetime ago, to adopt this striking symbol of wealth-by-water which is the basis of London's existence.

To the wider world, London is almost wholly a port. Many a Cockney may seldom look at his own river, but to the producers, merchants and shippers of five continents London is a row of docks and cranes, an assembly of stevedores and tally clerks, a place

where the quality of a shipped consignment is always about to be scrutinized. For, taking the average over the year, more than £1,000,000 worth of goods is unloaded on the London quayside every day. And few of the 10,000,000 people who live in and round the London region are without some share in that daily million pounds' worth. Thus the London County Council's nautical coat-of-arms is a fairly realistic piece of heraldry.

Anyone travelling across industrial London—the eastern half—will find his path beset by cranes, bridges, canals, warehouses, railway signals, ships' masts, river tunnels, and a continuous flow of heavy road traffic. He will have to pick his way through a world in which



*(Opposite) Old-fashioned Thames and Medway sailing-barges, with their dark brown canvas, are now becoming a rare sight. But in fair weather, and with an auxiliary engine, they can sail as far as Ireland or Scotland. (Below) The tug plays a vital part in the smooth running of the modern port; much of its work is done amid strong tides or in darkness and mist*



30,000 dock workers are handling the riches of the seven seas in 500 acres of warehouse floors, or in the holds or on the decks of 200 ships flying the flags of fifty nations. He may move on foot or bicycle, in ferryboat or steam railway, in an underground electric train, in bus or trolley, in taxi or private car; he may pass a river bank from which Hudson first sailed to North America, or the Blackwall mud whence the founders of Virginia set off; he may encounter the haunted site of Execution Dock or the fragrant and even more ancient memory of Cherry Garden Stairs, and he may well pass through the alleys of Ratcliff which inspired the brooding Dickens to write of murder. He will see on the one hand graceful Georgian buildings that recall the world of wigs and swords, and on the other the new world of green lawns and tall hygienic structures that is replacing the acres of slums that Hitler blew to bits.

An orderly system lies behind this variegated world. The docks of London consist of two kinds of organization. First, all the great enclosed docks and their quays, warehouses, and mechanical equipment are owned and run by a great public corporation, the Port of London Authority, through the medium of its specialist staffs. But there also exists a great number of completely independent business enterprises, run by private companies, which provide their own wharf, warehousing and docking facilities, as well as all kinds of services to ships. These businesses front on the open river, and vessels have direct access to them without passing through the closed dock system of the Port Authority.

It is, however, the public corporation—now more than forty years old—which is usually indicated when people speak of “the port” or “the docks”. The Authority was formed by Parliament in 1909, by grouping a number of independent dock companies which had originally built the separate docks in rivalry, and which had beggared themselves in ruinous competition for many years. The Authority is run by a board which is quite independent of government or municipal control. More than half the members of the board are elected by shipowners, merchants, and other users of the port; the remaining members are nominated by the City of London Corporation, the London County Council, the Elder Brethren of Trinity House (the body controlling English lighthouses and Thames pilotage), and certain government departments. The powerful Port of London Authority has therefore in its hands some of Europe’s greatest resources in docks, ware-

houses, and dock equipment.

The docks of London, as they stand today, packed with merchandise, form perhaps the world’s most practical lesson in geography, its most striking example of interdependence between nations. As one turns into the Thames estuary from the sea, entering the sixty-nine-mile stretch of tidal water which forms the port, one sees early signs of port activities at Thames Haven, some thirty-five miles below London Bridge; here are special jetties at which tankers discharge petroleum, well away from the rest of the port; close by are several large new refineries, which turn into motor spirit or fuel oil some of the 6,000,000 tons of crude oil which are yearly imported into the port of London.

Tilbury itself, twenty-six miles by the river channel from London Bridge, accommodates the largest liners. The floating landing-stage can be used at any state of the tide. Here dock the largest merchant vessels from Australia and the Far East; it is here that Sydney Harbour and Singapore suddenly begin to loom large in the imagination of the experienced traveller outward bound. Wool and dairy produce from Australia and New Zealand are landed here, silk and cotton from Japan, and tea, rubber, jute, hemp, and spices from India and the Straits.

The next dozen miles of river contain countless private wharves maintained by great industrial concerns for the export or import of their goods. Cement is shipped from near Northfleet, while paper and pulp from Canada are unloaded at quays on both sides of the river between Gravesend and Purfleet an important area of paper manufacture. Coal wharves receive coal for the London industrial area, coast-borne from the Durham pits, while at Dagenham the great Ford factory ships its tractors, trucks and cars from its own deep-water quay.

The Royal group of docks is the largest and most important in the port of London. Its 237 acres of water are spread over an area three miles in length, forming the largest sheet of dock water in the world. This group is in fact more extensive than many a city, for it covers two square miles of the map. Half-a-million tons of shipping can tie up at its quays, of which there are nearly twelve miles.

This group of docks specializes in meat, grain, and tobacco. Between a quarter and a third of the tobacco consumed by the people of Britain passes through the great tobacco warehouse of the Royal Victoria Dock. A visitor to the warehouse would notice hundreds of circular wooden casks or hogsheads,





*Every part of the docks in the Port of London is in the charge of an experienced master mariner. The dock-masters of the Port Authority must all possess their "master's ticket", for in any emergency they must assume command of the situation. At each dock the chief dock-master is helped by four or five assistant dock-masters. Captain F. A. C. Bishop, of the Royal Docks, holds the rank of Commander in the Royal Naval Reserve*



*Peter Wilkens, holder of the George Medal for gallantry, is master of the Beverley, a veteran ship-tug of the Port of London Authority, which Wilkens has served for thirty-two years. Ship-owning companies tow their own vessels up and down the river, but within the actual docks the ships are towed by the tugs of the Port Authority. Four twin-screw diesel-engined ship-tugs have recently been added to the Authority's fleet*





*Millions of pounds' worth of goods pass through London's port in a year, and each item is carefully counted as it moves from ship to quay, from quay to warehouse, to lorry or railway truck. W. Broughton, one of the trusted tally clerks, has worked for the same firm at Wapping for thirty-five years. Practically all counting is done by the traditional "sign of the gate": four pencil strokes down, then one across, reckoning in units of five*



*The agile lightermen of London will navigate a ponderous barge into place beneath a ship's hull with the gracefulness of a gondolier. London is a "barge port", for sixty per cent of the goods imported are handled from ship to shore, or from wharf to warehouse, in barges or lighters. A. Griffiths has been employed on barges of the same company for nearly half a century*



*A string of loaded barges—there are seven thousand of them in the port of London—is one of the characteristic sights of the Thames on any reach between Tilbury and the towering Houses of Parliament. A string of six loaded barges is the complement of each tug, and skilful use of the tides enables a vast tonnage to be shifted with economical use of power. Alexander Grant is the young skipper of one of these busy little barge-tugs*



*The Port of London employs a number of divers who see to the routine maintenance of dock property—moorings and lock-gates—as well as dealing with wrecks. A diver must possess unusual physical fitness. He is exposed to cold, to a restricted ventilation, and to water pressures which may affect his circulation if care is not taken. S. Scotchmer, an experienced diver of thirty-one, is seen preparing for under-water duty in the West India Dock*







*The divers in the Thames have to work almost entirely by touch. They are practically 'blind' when below the surface, owing to mud and other impurities which render the water opaque. Their work is often solitary, and calls for independence and initiative. Far below the divers' 'punt' which carries the lowering-gear, air-lines and telephone communication equipment, the individual diver must carry on in well-drilled silence in an invisible and chilly world*



*Inspector T. J. Newman, of the West India Dock, is a member of the Port of London Authority police who have the right to search persons and vehicles and check all goods leaving the gates. The dock police are quite independent of the Metropolitan force although the two bodies collaborate closely: the former do not operate on the water on which the river police, a branch of the Metropolitan force, work in fast launches*



each containing ten hundredweight of tobacco—about £3000 worth. More than 100,000 casks are in store in the port warehouses, under the closest guard, for their value to the Exchequer runs to scores of millions of pounds. Yet, except in the immediate vicinity of a cask which has been newly opened for customs sampling, there is hardly a smell of tobacco-leaf in the air.

A bird's-eye view of John Bull's larder can be had on the north quays of the Royal Victoria and Royal Albert Docks, and even more so in the cold store. Three-quarters of the meat imported into Britain passes through this place. The cold store, rising floor upon floor, was built for the Australian and New Zealand trade, and can accommodate 250,000 carcasses of mutton. Meat which has crossed the seas in refrigerated holds passes for a few moments through the open air of the London climate, to be plunged into 17 degrees of frost in the dock cold store, where it may safely remain three months or more if necessary. The carcasses are moved to the local markets in insulated lorries, railway trucks and barges.

Rising from the water's edge in the Royal Victoria Dock are the four largest flour mills in London. Here, when the ships from North American ports are towed in with grain, timber and canned goods, the grain is discharged direct from the ships into the waterside mills. Luxuries and necessities are found side by side on most docks: fruit from South America, skins from Africa, carpets from India and the Far East pass under the eye of the vigilant tally clerks of the Royal Docks.

Closer still to London are the old East and West India Docks, built a century and a half ago in the first decade of London's great era of dock-building. The West India Dock has kept up its old trading associations with the West Indies; its principal import in the early 19th century was sugar, and this is still handled in large quantities. Canary Wharf, at which fresh fruit from the Canary Islands is discharged, is a distinguished example of modern quay-planning with up-to-date equipment. The hardwood sheds of the West India Dock, well stored with West African mahogany and other logs, form the chief centre of the London hardwood trade. Close by at Millwall, the principal grain dock, is the Port Authority's central granary, with a capacity of 35,000 tons. A fleet of floating grain elevators can cope with 2500 tons of grain an hour, sucking it from the ships' holds, weighing it automatically, and discharging it into coasters and barges alongside.

Only one of the great London groups of

docks lies on the south bank of the river—the Surrey Docks, devoted in the main to timber imports. Here is the famous Greenland Dock of the 19th-century whaling ships; it was in this district that Sherlock Holmes laid a trap for the unknown seaman who had killed Black Peter with a harpoon. Nowadays the wealth of the whale is extracted in floating factories in distant seas, and the ancient dock, with its 17th-century associations, has been fully modernized and deals with vessels drawing up to 28-foot draught. In the Surrey Commercial Docks are the traditional 'ponds' in which thousands of tons of timber, unloaded from the timber ships, float in the water like huge rafts. One-third of Britain's imports of timber pass through this group of docks, and during the summer season, when ships are allowed to carry timber piled high on their decks, the special "woody" smell of a timber ship from the Baltic or from North American ports is frequently met with in the crowded Thames.

Passengers in vessels which berth in the Surrey Docks or higher up-river sometimes enjoy the experience of passing close to the Greenwich Royal Naval College in the mists of sunrise or sunset, and of seeing a noble group of buildings touched by the creative hands of Wren, Inigo Jones and Vanbrugh.

One dock is set in surroundings which carry a romantic flavour of their own—the old "London" Dock, built in the year of Trafalgar, and squeezed between ancient Wapping and the former Ratcliff Highway. But romance here lies only in the safety of retrospect, for seventy years ago tough sailormen were the frequent prey of harpies, footpads and lodging-house keepers of an area in which even policemen did not penetrate without danger. A walk today through Wapping, particularly on a sunny afternoon, is a reminder of a bygone London, with high warehouse walls of fortress-like architecture, separated by narrow and winding alleys running down to the river to a series of boatmen's "stairs"—Wapping Old Stairs, King Henry's Stairs, Pelican Stairs. In the London Dock, one of the centres of the great dockside fire which introduced in September 1940 the ninety continuous nights of bombing of London by the German *Luftwaffe*, vessels of fairly light draught bring imports mainly from Continental Europe—fresh fruits, sardines, wines, brandy and dried fruit from France, Spain and Portugal, marble, green fruit and olive oil from Italy, and glassware, iron plates, girders and manufactured goods from Belgian ports.

This dock is famous for two things: it is

used as a warehouse centre for London's huge wool imports, which are half those of the entire United Kingdom, and there runs beneath it the immense range of vaults in which imported wines and spirits have been housed since Nelson's day. In a quiet world muffled by strewn sawdust, beneath brick arches which bear the weight of many storeys, a hundred acres of cellars stretch into the gloom in

every direction. A white fungus spreads over the older casks—some have been here for years—and clings to the vaulting, bred by the damp and warmth of this vinous place.

The wool warehouse is regularly visited by wool buyers from many parts of the world: they move from bale to bale, examining the fluffy samples of each, and noting its quality in a catalogue before returning to the City to

*The routine check: at the gate of the West India Dock a seaman shows his pass to a dock policeman as he leaves to go ashore. Comfortable hostels for seamen of many races are now maintained in the port area, and welfare organizations try to help young sailors unused to the ways of a big city*







(Above) The small St Katharine's Dock, by the Tower of London, was built in 1827-8 by Thomas Telford, the great engineer and maker of roads and canals. Its architectural dignity has survived severe bombing, but it is to be replaced by a promenade. (Left) A corner of Wapping, in which untidy and obsolete buildings mingle with modern ones in congested streets. It is intended ultimately to turn this riverside area into tree-lined walks with restaurants and pleasure-gardens



*In a good year half a million motor vehicles are exported from Britain; a proportion of the makers' shipments to overseas agents passes through London, as well as many cars bought in England by overseas visitors who take their chosen vehicle away with them. Agricultural tractors have also become an important post-war export from the Port of London*

*The riches of five continents are safely lashed down in the thousands of lighters that line both banks of the Thames and the quay walls of all the enclosed docks. Most goods, from ship to warehouse or rail-head, are barge-borne, and each craft and its tarpaulins bear distinguishing marks. But even in the dark a docker will recognize the barge he works with, sometimes merely by the characteristic sound of the water under its bows*





*For two thousand years craft have sat on the black Thames mud which the retreating North Sea tide exposes twice a day. Once the mud bore sea-going sailing-ships, but now almost only barges. High tide is a busy time, for a craft unloaded this morning must float away and the new craft which is to unload this afternoon must move then into her mud berth*





*The forty-four miles of quays and the million tons of warehouse space of the Port of London form no more than the edging of one of the greatest zones of industrial production in the world*

bid at the auction sales at the London Wool Exchange.

The tiny dock of St Katharine, wedged between the Tower of London, the Royal Mint, and the river, is chiefly used by lighters which bring cargo to and fro between its warehouses and the sea-going ships moored in deeper water down the river. From time to time small but unusual craft tie up in St Katharine's Dock, such as adventurous ocean-going private yachts and explorers' research vessels.

London, with its large and comparatively prosperous population, is chiefly an importing area, yet a steady stream of exports and re-exports brings many millions of pounds, some of it in dollar currencies, into London's pocket. The 700 ships a month which leave London on the regular sailing schedules of more than 100 shipping companies berth in 300 ports in many parts of the world, and to many of these they take goods from London.

But the great achievements of the port of London are, in the last resort, not the product of impersonal organizations, steel ships and concrete warehouses. These things were made by men and are controlled by them day and night—thousands of men, who are called Londoners but who are in fact Scotsmen, Welshmen, Irishmen, North Countrymen, East Anglians, West Countrymen, Midlanders and Cockneys. These men must include more specialists than any other group of workers in the world; one man works a 150-ton crane which lifts a steam locomotive off its rails at the quayside; another expertly makes a bung jump out of a wine cask in the depths of a dark cellar; while a third, arrayed in marine uniform on the bridge of a ship, shouts orders through a megaphone to a crew a few feet from a red London bus in which typists are reading their evening papers.

There is always a surprise in the Port of London . . .



# Spain in Mexico

by JOHN MIDGLEY

Photographs by TANIA STANHAM

MEXICO, though it is not the only country that is lovely and full of wonders, does cast upon the traveller a singularly powerful spell. If, collecting himself, he asks why, there are many answers that offer; none is complete. High among them is the dual character of the country's civilization—the manner, perhaps without a complete parallel elsewhere, in which two ancient streams of human culture, the Middle American and the Mediterranean Spanish, each having separately reached an advanced point in its natural course, each with high qualities and outrageous defects, have joined in a combined stream in which the characteristics of both can be seen though they cannot be disentangled.

The resultant synthesis is not final. It is not even wholly stable. The confluence of the two streams was violent and destructive; it left a bitter taste that has never vanished and grudges that are not forgotten. In Mexican culture and society the European and indigenous elements still struggle with and react upon each other in many ways. They have begun to feel in their turn in this century the impact of a new and different material culture from the United States: the internal combustion engine, the sewing machine, the radio, sanitation, public health, the refrigerator and the standardized soft drink. Nowadays the street letter-writer works with a typewriter, his volume of business undiminished. Who will guess at the aspect of Mexico in another fifty years? Yet if the material culture of the North prevails in the end it will have prevailed over a culture that is recognizably, distinctly, and exclusively Mexican: the product of two meridional cultures, those of southern Europe and southern North America.

At sight of a cool patio through a doorway in a hot street of Spanish tiled houses in Pátzcuaro, of the enchanting plaza at Celaya when the lights go on at dusk, of the black fighting bulls grazing on the plateau where the Lerma rises, or of a landscape in the Valley of Mexico that might be on the Aragon, the English traveller will at once fancy himself in Spain. Later he will not be so sure; other things are different, and in any case it becomes an undue effort to remember what the rest of the world is like. His senses are assailed and outflanked in so many dimensions—by the sun, the colour, the sharp

luminous air, the bulk and form of the mountain ranges, the height of noise and the depth of silence, the unresting movement of people in the mass, their tranquillity and repose singly. Bewitched, he is hardly to be blamed for accepting the synthesis as it exists and forgetting the questions. Many perceptive travellers do this; small wonder if some of the books they afterwards write, though strong in feeling, are weak on detail.

Such a traveller, if he finds the resemblance to Spain too subtle in some ways for analysis—it may suggest itself through the stance of a musician waiting to play at the *fiesta*, a peasant on muleback riding slowly down a mountain track, the carriage of an Indian woman in the market—can take comfort from the fact that the Conquistadores were puzzled before him. One of them, Bernal Diaz, records of their arrival at Tenochtitlan: "We did not know what to say or whether what appeared before us was real." Reality or enchantment, it recalled to them, too, their own distant country—and this before they had time to set in motion the process of destruction and innovation that must, through the following century, have changed the landscape in its man-made aspects. They had yet to raze the forests and destroy the hydrographic system of the Valley of Mexico. They had still to introduce the wheel, the uses of iron, the domestic ox, horse, sheep, goat, donkey and mule, to plant sugar-cane and citrus, to tear down the Aztec temples and build in their place Spanish cathedrals, incorporating the Aztec masonry in their foundations. Cortés in 1520, writing home to Charles V, supported a request that the king should name his prospective new dominion *la Nueva España del Mar Oceano* by remarking on the many likenesses in features and products between the two countries.

Perhaps, therefore, one should not attribute the whole of the likeness to Spanish influence. Some features of agrarian life are much the same in any warm zone where subsistence farming is the basic economy. In such a society, wherever it may be, the town is essentially a market and displays some common features. The country towns of Spain and Mexico are clearly alike in this. But from the description by Cortés the Aztec market has not changed very greatly from his day to ours,



*This scene, against which the women of Acolman, twenty miles from Mexico City on the road to the dead city of Teotihuacán, wash their linen in a stream, might be a landscape in Navarre or Aragon*

though it has lost in the richness of some classes of merchandise and gained in the variety of others. Mexican peasants squat today, as they did then, in front of their produce arranged in small symmetrical heaps on a mat, waiting for a buyer. Some of their produce is new. Mexican cooking, as you find it in the small inns and in any house rich enough to have a kitchen at all, is an adaptation of the Mediterranean kitchen to the materials of Middle America. Mrs Sybille Bedford, who is clearly an expert and learned cook, remarks in her charming book *The Sudden View* that the change "suited the climate, the potentialities of the land, and joined quite naturally with the indigenous roots, just as that Mediterranean tradition itself was a happy hybrid." In fact the staple ingredients of the common Mexican diet today, except for meat, sugar, and eggs, are pre-Columbian. There is nothing Spanish about the *tortilla* but its name. Maize, squash, some excellent

types of bean, gourds, avocado pears, tomatoes, pimentos, chillies, pineapples, vanilla, and chocolate—these delicious and valuable things were in the Aztec diet and entered the world's cuisine from Middle America. The conquest in the kitchen was a two-way traffic. Montezuma, unlike his conqueror Charles V, drank chocolate, and smoked a pipe after dinner.

Let us suppose, then, that the parallels of climate and economy between the Mediterranean and Aztec civilizations, rough though they were, were close enough to make their fusion relatively easy once the fighting stopped. What happened in the American Indian's kitchen happened also in his wardrobe. That most distinctive of Mexican garments, the *zarape* (the blanket of coarse wool, wrapped around the shoulders or slipped over the head like a *poncho*, and carried folded through the heat of the day) is still called *tilmahtl* by Nahuatl-speaking Mexicans: this





(Above) *No settler is more at home in the climate and economy of Mexico than the Mediterranean donkey. These two, seen at Taxco, carry charcoal for a silversmith. The tiled roof, too, is a Spanish importation.* (Right) *Sugar-cane is refreshing to chew as one walks round the market. With sugar the Spaniards brought to Mexico large-scale cultivation and the relationship of landowner and labourer. The stall is in the market at San Juan de los Lagos, a place of pilgrimage*





*The houses built for Spaniards by Mexican workmen gave to the New World a new architectural idiom, which is seen in the decoration of a house, built about two centuries after the Conquest, in Taxco when that city was at the height of its prosperity as a result of the discovery and exploitation of silver by the Spaniards. The mines have since declined, but Taxco is now the centre of a new silversmith industry*

*(Right) A Tarascan woman is buying a delicious fruit, a chirimoya, which has not changed since long before the Conquest; nor has the manner of selling it. But the rebozo or shawl that she wears is an adaptation of the mantilla which was brought from Spain*







*The Catholic faith, imposed upon the Indian peoples of Mexico by force, was taught with zeal and took root. Churchgoing in Tepoztlán precedes the morning's shopping in the Sunday market*







*In the churchyard at Tzintzuntzán (opposite) the sun rises upon an encampment of Tarascans gathered from outlying villages for the principal fiesta of their year. (Right) Many Mexicans ride; only a few wear boots: this riding-boot is clearly of Spanish extraction*

was the term the Aztecs used for their cape, usually of cotton and embroidered or woven with a decorative design. The zarape has evolved since their time with the breeding of sheep for wool. The conjecture is that its form and use were influenced both by the Aztec cape and by the heavy blankets which the Spanish Conquerors carried and on which they slept. Thus its ancestry is in America and Spain, equally. Hardly less characteristic of any Mexican scene is the graceful and versatile *rebozo*, the long full scarf, much lighter in weight, which the women wear thrown round their shoulders and, at need, wound over their heads. This has no Aztec parentage, but its use goes back to the end of the 16th century; probably it was a modification of the Spanish *mantilla* for Indian peasant use.

Spanish influence brought the man's shirt and blouse, the loose cotton trousers held up by a cloth belt or sash, the countrywoman's collarless shirt and full, gored or pleated skirt, as well as the townswoman's European dress. Some tribal Indians still wear their pre-Columbian costume substantially unchanged; one sees them in the Nayarit, at the season when they come down from the sierra to perform their ritual of worship on the Pacific shore, plodding in single file seaward through the villages. They are the exceptions. The general costume, though adapted to Mexican needs and tastes, is unmistakably Spanish in form and cut and in the manner in which it is worn.

The three generations that followed the Conquest saw Spanish power at its zenith in the world at large. Spanish government in the 16th century had the will to frame policies, the ships to maintain communications, and the force to make its wishes effective in its dependencies. It aimed at a Mexican pro-



vince worked economically for the benefit of Spain but not in disregard of its own welfare, and inhabited by a Christian community of free citizens. The design went wrong, but in pursuit of it many devoted and learned functionaries of the State and the Church spent their lives struggling to repair and amplify the material structure of the Aztec civilization with Spanish knowledge. Often it was uphill work against individualist soldiers of fortune who had won for themselves land and power.

A period of active fusion and construction began and lasted until Spanish power began to decline, communications by sea began to fall away, and the Crown loosened its grip. (For this, the losses inflicted on Spanish seapower by England have been blamed.) One of the accompanying pictures was taken in the churchyard of Tzintzuntzán, where the first Bishop of Michoacan, Vasco de Quiroga, planted olive trees which still stand. Bishop Quiroga was appointed in 1538, when the disintegration of the Tarascan Indian society under the shock of the Conquest was already far advanced; the tribes were withdrawing to the sierra out of the way; some of them have



kept out of the way ever since.

An idealist, Vasco de Quiroga conceived the idea of reconstructing Tarascan society on the lines of Thomas More's *Utopia*, and put it up to the Council of the Indies; that, no doubt, was the end of it. But he is still held in honour as the patron of Michoacán who enforced justice, built towns, taught Spanish arts and crafts and husbandry to the Tarascans and induced them to re-settle the valleys from which they had fled in despair. His idealized figure is to be seen pointing the way to *Utopia* in a modern fresco in the library at Pátzcuaro, with Sir Thomas More looking over his shoulder. An old street in Pátzcuaro is named after him; it is distinguished by some lovely Spanish houses—deep eaves, roofs of curved red tiles, carven balconies, and gracefully colonnaded courtyards. The Spaniards taught the Mexicans to tile their roofs, to build on more than one storey, to let in light through windows, and to build arches. Aztec houses of the better sort were roofed with small poles fitted closely together on cross beams and finished off with a layer of plaster. Aztec doorways and colonnades were straight upright-and-crosspiece structures. Many a Mexican town now depends for its character on the gay and graceful use of the arch.

Some far-reaching actions of the Spanish Crown were taken, perhaps inevitably, in ignorance. One thing that was overlooked was the Aztec system of communal land-tenure. Men found themselves dispossessed of their share in the use of the land, or they were abruptly converted from tribal chiefs, with land rights related to their offices as the law and custom of their people laid down, into feudal lords and hereditary owners—ideas which their law did not know. Big land grants were made to conquerors for their services, to the Church for its work, and to favoured settlers who came later. In the emptier regions of the north the *hacienda* system (with its complement, the status of landless labourer) took hold quickly, the vast stretches of thinly populated land pleading for large-scale treatment. In other regions it had to wait for the economic pressure of a new crop lending itself technically to large units, like sugar-cane with its need of irrigation and of crushing plant. These trends persisted until the revolution which began in 1910 and which is only now beginning to be regarded as over. Since then the trend has been opposite; the pre-Columbian system of corporate land tenure (with the *ejido*, or communal village domain, and individual rights of user) has gained ground once more. In Morelos this

has been accompanied by a drift back from sugar to maize, and the State has had to step in to keep some of the sugar plantations together. In the outcome, personal ownership and communal tenure, the Castilian and the Indian ideas of landholding, money crops and subsistence crops, survive side by side.

Christianity, imposed on the Aztec peoples with force as well as zeal, was accepted by them with a startling fervour. The Christian calendar superimposed on the Aztec ritual year produced an unending cycle of feast days which still fixes the rhythm by which life is lived. The Aztec temples were torn down or the images of their gods broken, and the Indians were set to work in vast numbers to build, in appalling conditions and with the sacrifice of countless lives, massive convents and splendid churches, wholly Spanish in structure and in their contribution to the landscape, though they reflect in so many details of adornment the Indian artisan's aesthetic tradition and his concepts of the attributes of authority. Indeed, those communities that had not been hopelessly weakened experienced a flowering of the decorative crafts, for at the same moment as a new religion seized his imagination the Indian craftsman found steel tools, unknown to his forbears who had chipped away with stone implements, ready to his hand. Opportunity and temperament caused the Mexicans to take to Christian sculpture with enthusiasm and to elaborate it with love.

Perhaps (to go back to the kitchen) the easy and natural amalgamation of the Spanish and Aztec cuisines is as good a guide as any to what happened more generally. The two agricultural economies were not so very far apart, though the social structures built upon them were—and have never quite become reconciled. The temperate and cold zones of Mexico were similar enough to Spain to make a fusion of the two ways of life possible. In the outcome, not only the ways of life but the colonizers and their subjects themselves have fused. The number of pure Creoles is by now very small (to be more specific would start an argument). The pure Indians are much more numerous, perhaps three millions, very likely more. The great majority are neither. Measured by racial origin they are for the most part much more Indian than Spanish. They form, as George Vaillant said, "the most American of American nations". Yet no country of Latin America is so like Spain as theirs. The two streams have joined, indivisibly, to form a civilization that is new and at the same time very old.